

THROUGH AMANULLAH'S AFGHANISTAN

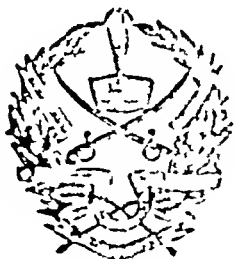
THROUGH AMANULLAH'S AFGHANISTAN

A BOOK OF TRAVEL

WITH MORE THAN THIRTY ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

BY

SORAB K. H. KATRAK



KARACHI

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TO MY PARENTS

*"Be grateful unto thy parents in thought and word and deed
for all they have done for thee"*

Dinkard,

P R E F A C E

AFGHANISTAN! What string of varied thoughts pass through our minds when we utter this ancient name? From our childhood we have been associating this name with tyranny, bloodshed, lawlessness, robbery, murders and many similar wild actions, and yet how few of us know what changes Afghanistan had gone through during the time Amanullah Khan held the sway over this wild and barren country?

And yet I hardly dreamt that the same Amanullah about whom I wrote in the Illustrated Weekly of India as under, would be a fallen hero scarcely within three months of my leaving his capital city —

“Afghanistan as it stands to-day is like two arms of a scale on one side of which are the young Afghans, polished, polite, hospitable and eager to acquire what is considered the best civilization of the present age, ready to brush aside all superstitions, religious dogmas and ancient social manners and customs, whereas the other arm represents the old bigoted, unpolished, primitive Afghans who do not seem to have changed very much from what we have been used to read and hear about them, and who do not want to shake off their old habits, manners and customs. The result can naturally be expected in little occasional tiffs between the old and the new. But a very careful search will reveal the fact that with the stern and diplomatic manner in which H. M.

The King is steering the wheels of his small but United Kingdom and the way in which his honourable consort is helping him, time will not be distant when Afghanistan will claim to stand in the coterie of civilised nations of the world " 1

But such indeed is the way of the world. The overthrow of the once famous Amanullah, whom the nations vied to outdo in their hospitality and the show of the pomp and power, furnishes us with one more instance of the oft quoted Sufi saying that all in this world is transitory. As Shakespeare says in his *Tempest* :

"The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherits, shall dissolve
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind."

And so the prophetic words have once again proved their worth.

Surely every reader of this book will sympathise with the unfortunate king and his beautiful consort in their present predicament and they may even hope that the history may repeat itself, for was not Abdur Rahman, the grand father of Amanullah, an exile from his own country for over ten years in Russia, and did he not eventually return home a conquering hero to rule over Afghanistan with Iron Hands ? Let us hope it will, for the advancement of this isolated country.

1 The Illustrated Weekly of India. 27th March 1929.

A word or two of thanks before I end my preface.

Mr. G K Nariman, my scholar friend of great renown at Bombay, the first and only Parsi scholar to travel in Afghanistan, has done me honour by consenting to write a foreword to my book. But for the encouragement from him, I would not have ventured to place this maiden effort of mine before the public. I offer him my sincerest thanks for his scholarly and informative foreword to this book as well as for his masterly guidance in preparing the bibliography of Afghanistan

My special debt of gratitude is due to my revered friend and guide the learned High Priest of the Parsis of Karachi, Dastur Doctor M. N. Dhalla, M A., Ph D, whom I owe the informative and useful chapter on Afghanistan and the Parsis, also general inspiration and assistance in the publication of this book.

My friend Mr. N. M Billimoria has taken great pains in preparing a bibliography for my book and for rendering sundry other assistance in the work for which I extend to him my grateful thanks.

In the end I cannot help mentioning the great disappointment that was caused to me by the loss of some of my very valuable photographs taken at Kabul and other places in Afghanistan. These were given to my friend Mr. N. D. Mallick to be carried back to India, ere I returned from my tour round

Kashmir, but this gentleman met with a mishap on the way to Ghazni and lost his luggage containing, besides other things, the above said photographs which would have been of special interest to the readers of this book. I live in hopes of finding them somehow some day as Afghans hope for something to turn up somehow by solemnly muttering INSHALLAH !

Deena Katrak Lodge,
Clifton,
KARACHI. (India).
September, 1929.

Sorab K H. Katrak.

INTRODUCTION

AFGHANISTAN OF AMANULLAH KHAN

Afghanistan before 1919 was hardly open to the civilised world. With the appearance of Shah Amanullah began a new period in the history of the country. It was hailed as heralding a dawn. Unfortunately with the departure of King Amanullah Khan from the Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay, where he lived after his abdication as honoured guest of the Government of India, for Italy on the 22nd of June, that epoch closes, if, as is fervently hoped, temporarily. Thus the annals of the country have an oasis of eight years between the vast desert of semi-barbarism which preceeded 1919 and the civil war which has ensued, betokening the country "back to dark despotism in the name of religion." The friends of Afghanistan cherish the ardent aspiration that the second period of obscurity may prove an abbreviated one.

A large portion of the present Afghanistan was considered Zoroastrian territory. The country abounds in ruins of Parsi period of domination. The works of orientalist like Niedermayer testify to it (see our Bulletin of the Iran League). The names of several rivers of Afghanistan have been identified by Sir Aurl Stein from *Farwardin Yesht* of the Avesta. Elsewhere have been proved the identity of many holy mountain peaks enumerated in the Pahlavi *Bundahishh*.

The Buddhist period of Afghanistan is pre-eminently represented by the ruins of monuments

scattered over the entire face of the country. During most of the Moghul period (1526-1707) Afghanistan was governed as a province by the deputies of the Emperors of Delhi. The principal cities Kabul, Ghazni, Kandahar, and Herat have been considered each a key to the adventurous foreigner in Central Asia lured by the riches of Ind. There was an intermediate epoch of the Shahi Kings of Kabul of Brahmanic faith.

Ancient Afghans were called Pashtawans, their language Pashtu. It is more akin to the ancient Persian than the modern Persian of Iran, with its copious admixture of Arabic. Herodotus mentions the country whose original name was possibly *Ashvaghan*, or Land of Horses. Firdausi is not without references to the heroes of Kabul and Zabul and historic facts buried in poetic legend. Up to the introduction of Islam the culture of Afghanistan was Buddhist and Zoroastrian. Zoroaster preached his gospel at Balkh which has enjoyed remarkable celebrity as a renowned centre in touch with the tripple civilization of China, India and Iran.

On the 20th February 1919, King Habibullah Khan, the father of Amanullah Khan, had halted in his tour at Jalalabad with a regiment. The tents of the Amir were sorrouned by those of his brothers, sons and grandees

Towards midnight the report of a gun broke the silence. It had issued from the tent of the Amir. All rushed to it and found the Amir assassinated.

Over the murder of King Habibullah lies a shroud of impenetrable mystery. How Nassurallah, brother of late Amir, aimed at the crown ; how he wrote to Amanullah, the then Governor of Kabul, to recognise him sovereign, how the latter desired to consult the nation, is all a matter of history.

Once elevated to the throne by the will of his people Amanullah threw himself body, heart and soul into the task of redeeming his motherland from ignorance, sloth, corruption, bigotry, and partial subordination to the foreign paramount power from which it received a yearly subsidy of 12 raised to 18 lakhs in lieu of an undertaking to have no relations with foreign states save through Britain. Amanullah is the third son of Habibullah and was born at Kabul in 1891. The one aim of his rule was to see Afghanistan free. He married the daughter of a journalist who edited *Siraj-ul-Akhbar*, Mahamud Tarzi, a personality without parallel at home. He had ample share in the making of modern Afghanistan. He was for many years in foreign countries. The young King was greatly influenced by his father-in-law.

To this Mahamud Beg Tarzi is partly due the credit of initiating modernization of Afghanistan. His father Ghulam Muhammad Khan Tarzi was a descendant, in direct line of Sardar Rahmdil Khan, brother of Amir Dost Muhammad. His mother was of the Sadozai clan. During the reign of Abdurrahman Khan, Ghulam Muhammad Khan was accused

of conspiracy and high treason. He was banished into exile with his whole family. They established themselves in Damuscas. Here Mahamud Tarzi, quite a young man at that time, married a Syrian lady of noble origin. The union had a numerous progeny, 20 children in all. After the death of Ghulam Muhammad Khan Tarzi, amnesty was granted by Amir Habibullah Khan to the members of his family and Mahamud Tarzi returned to Kabul. He is a man of great literary attainments and thoroughly conversant with the Eastern languages, Pashtu, Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Urdu. The present writer conversed with him and noted his fluent Hindustani at Paghman. Mahamud Tarzi not only founded and edited the *Siraj-ul-Akhbar* but also found time to translate, from the Arabic and Turkish versions, several novels by Jules Verne. He is likewise author of original works.

Of Mahamud Tarzi's children the colonel Abddut Tawwab Khan Tarzi, after having for several years followed the course of the military school of Saint-Cyr in France, was recently appointed instructor in the military academy at Kabul. Another son, Abdul Wahhab Khan, has returned from the University of Oxford. Mahamud Tarzi's eldest daughter is married to Sardar Inayatullah Khan, the eldest son of the late Amir Habibullah Khan. His third daughter is the Queen Consort of Amanullah Khan.

The first act of the new sovereign was to send a letter to the Viceroy of India, proclaiming the

independence of Afghanistan and determination to conduct its own foreign relations. This led to a war. The British occupied Dacca. General Nadir-khan assembled his troops and paring Thull claimed to have penetrated India. The situation lasted for four months and the Treaty of Rawalpindi was concluded. The Anglo-Indian army was accounted vanquished and the event was recorded on pillars near the arch of triumph at Paghman, the summer seat of Amanullah. The peace delegation was presided over by Mahmud Tarzi. Preparations for the peace began on July 20th and on 8th August the signatures were affixed by the plenipotentiaries.

Afghanistan now concluded direct treaties with other European powers, Belgium, Turkey, the Soviet Russia. A very curious clause of the treaty with the latter provides for "*Un Subside annuel de un million de roubles or, argent ou cuivre, sera fourni comme aide a l'Afghanistan*". It was signed at Moscow on February 28, 1921.

Modern Afghanistan is a country of Islamic civilization. The majority of its population is of Iranian origin. Persia always exercised preponderating influence on Afghanistan. Among the sources of civilising influence must be mentioned the Islamic *Shariat*. For while the Zoroastrian and the Buddhistic codes of ethics were long extinct in the country, of the other pre-Islamic cultures only a remnant of paganism survived in parts of the country. It was overcome by the predecessor of Amanullah who forcibly converted the people of Kafirstan to Islam and

named the province Nuristan. The Islamic *Shariat* or canon law distinguishes rather vaguely between secular and spiritual affairs. On the other hand it preaches universal fraternity among the believers. The Afghan frame of mind, emerging from the anterior gloom, was not dazzled by the westernization of Amanullah. The ground was prepared, however crudely, by Habibullah, whose *harem* put on European costume. There is no lack of reliable books of travel mostly by English author—adventurous for the pre-Amanullah age; for the Amanullah regime the authorities are Raymond Furon, Trinker and Foucher. The Afghan nation largely responded to the will of the autocrat Amanullah who ruled as a monarch that had himself limited his sovereign prerogatives.

The Press during these nine years have been a mirror, to a very large extent, of the Afghan soul. It has been studied with accuracy by two authorities, both of them Russian,—Mr. Bogdanov so well known by his researches in the Avesta and who was in Kabul for several years at the French legation and by Mr. Nikitine (*La Mentalité Afghane moderne*). If spirituous liquors were prohibited admittance into the country in accordance with the *shariat*, import of articles of luxury is forbidden on patriotic grounds. The Musalman mentality of the orthodox Afghans can be judged by the treatment according to the Quadianis, who also profess Islam. The progressive Moslems of Afghanistan stand for unqualified sane modernism.

The question of the emancipation of women has greatly agitated the country. The Islamic law

gives much greater liberty to women than is usually imagined. While primitive Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism or Zoroastrianism hardly limit the number of man's legitimate wives, Islam fixes them at four. The monogamy of the modern West rests on no scriptures. The humiliating position of women in Islam is of later origin just as the elevation of womanhood in most other creeds is of relative recent growth. A woman's role varies according to the Musalman community, in which she lives. Under the Moslem nomads of Turkestan she was as unrestrained as man himself and did not have to put on the *paranja* or veil. This was so before the Soviet rule. To-day in large cities like Samarkand women stand on the same social level as men. Disabilities on women were only partial in these territories adjacent to Afghanistan even before the establishment of the Soviet Republics of Turkomanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Hence the reforms in this direction were not quite the springing of a surprise. But the new Afghan mentality wavered between the Sylla of the *shariat* on the one hand and the Charybdis of nationalism or *Afghaniat* on the other. Islam recognises no nationality. It transcends all political and ethnic barriers. It has no national ideals. All the nations professing Islam are divided, according to the *shariat*, into *darul Islam*, composed of the believers and the *darul Harab*, consisting of those who deny the creed. The task of the patriot is to reconcile these two apparently conflicting principles,—nationality and religion. The nationalist sentiment acquired predominance when the relations with Britain suffered rupture.

The young nationalist Afghan, like the other members of the Islamic World, has had resort to an Arabic term to express the concept of nation, —*millat*. In reality it signifies a religious community. It proves the opposition of ideals between nation and religion. As regards the term *watan* for native land, another Arabic word, adopted in all Islamic countries, it denotes the nomadic society of its origin. For it means only a place where camels or cattle foregather. Mr. Nikitine quotes a passionate poem written on *watan* in an Afghan paper. It states that a country under subjection to another is like a tree devoid of roots. As against the comparatively new ideals of brotherhood inculcated by the *shariat* and nationality, the disease of today, there has survived among the Afghans from remote antiquity a peculiar institution. It is purely Aryan. It goes back to the days anterior to Buddhism. It is called Jirga or a democratic assembly of people. Here are deliberated upon and decided the various problems of the country, affecting religion, politics, economics.

Alongside of the Press various Government bureaus connected with education throw light on the spirit of the reformed Afghan mentality. The *Darul Talif* or, the department of publication, which is occupied with the compilation of educational works had its *Majmue Askri*. Economy was represented by *Majella Sarvet*. There were some ten periodicals of which *Amane Afghan* was the best known. The better class of periodicals drew their inspiration from Egypt, Turkey, Persia. Anglo-Indian papers

were cited copiously, almost always with exacerbation. The *Statesman* and *Civil and Military Gazette* came in for castigations like "an absolute lie" spread over four spacious columns (Bogdanov in *Islamic Culture*). Latterly the *Asias* became a frank critic.

"Those who wish to live", said an Afghan journalist "must have two qualifications, the pen and the sword." Public opinion was sufficiently cultivated to start what was in fullness of time to correspond to a university. There were warm discussions as to the subjects to be taught there. Was it to be the centre of a revival of Avicenna, Razi, Gazali, Ibn Khaldun? Was it to be unadulterated occidental science? Whatever its programme, the need of a seat of learning was felt beyond all doubt. There was simultaneously the question of the acquisition of knowledge at home or abroad. Certain people were for the education at home. King Amanullah was for combining instruction with travel. His partisans relied on the Islamic traditional dictum which bids you go even to China in search of knowledge.

Then came the problem of the linguistic medium. Persian so long the language of court and culture, was regarded as alien idiom. Pashtu of Iranian origin, was looked up to as the national tongue. At one time Amanullah was inclined towards its adoption. Morgenstern, who gives as many dialects to Afghanistan as are found in an answering area of India, no doubt upset the calculations of the extreme patriots. The King delivered often his unpassioned and impromptu speeches in Pashtu. The crowds hung on his lips.

Discoursing on poetry and art, an Afghan paper quoted Taine and his view that the world is conquered by poets and that nothing can resist the charm of a work of art. The Afghan Military Review was the reverse of a militant and bellicose pieces of journalism. It kept its readers in touch with the technique of war and multiplied avowals touching Afghanistans resolve to secure a period of political tranquility. Aggression was a negation of the young Afghan's creed. It was peace which was essential for the development of the resources of the country. The question of hygiene was not neglected. Much stress was laid even in the war office Bulletins on the position of women in society. The young Afghan officers received their lessons of gallantry and chivalry in the columns of the military review. In town planning, Afghanistan took as its model no Indian city. The first to have a municipality, *the Baladiya* was Mazare Shariff, much nearer to the Soviet orbit of influence.

In the midst of the profound transformation of the country the mass of the populace was spontaneously drawn to the one section of the celebration of the annual Independence Day, dealing with the Agricultural exhibition. The King put on his national dress and ploughed the first furrow. This moving rustic ceremony reaches back to high antiquity. It is in the Avesta, as a matter of fact, that we find the intense attachment to land and glorification of agriculture, the sanctification of tillage, as an article of faith. The Afghan King's initial operation as ploughman was a living emblematic relic of forgotten

Zoroastrianism Hence my repeated belief that Afghanistan has as much sentimental claim on the Parsis as Persia itself

The vital importance of Afghanistan to India as Mrs Annette Beveridge shows is obvious from the fact that all the great invaders marched through the North Western passes into India. Alexander of Macedon moved from Charnikar to Charsadda in 327 B C. The Sultan Mahamud Ghazni in the 10th century came down the Kurram Valley. Mahamud of Ghor who was murdered in 1206 followed nearly the same route. Chingiz Khan in the 14th century proceeded across Balkh, Bamian, Peshawar and Bajaur. Timur in the 13th century from Samarkand serged through the Andarab Valley Babar in 1519 penetrated the Khaibar pass. Nadirshah in 1738 took the route of Kabul, Khaibar, Indus.

Afghanistan that I saw was improved upon during the interval after which it was visited by Mr Sorab K. H Katrak of Karachi. The impressions of this gentleman were obtained when the country was probably at its zenith in the Amanullah regime. To me the modernization did not give the appearance of a mashroom growth The set back that the country has suffered is not irretrievable to the reasonable optimist, though a very severe one it is. Any way it was not fanaticism of the reactionaries but the treachery of the people who abused religion to serve their selfish ends, which brought about the catastrophe. Unbelievers themselves, the miscreants exploited the cheap religious furor of imbecile zealots The struc-

ture has tumbled down but the foundations appear to have been laid with forethought and p̄escience. King Amanullah has created a mentality which will impell the young Afghans to reassert themselves, after the temporary blast of infidel exploiters of religion has spent its diabolical force. And Afghanistan has yet true sons like the Minister Hadi who clung to the last to the fallen ruler,—among the faithless faithful only he.

G. K. Nariman.

Mazgaon P. O.
Bombay.

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Amanullah Khan Ex-King of Afghanistan

THROUGH AMANULLAH'S AFGHANISTAN

CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHY OF AFGHANISTAN

"Afghanistan is situated in Central Asia with an estimated area of 215,000 square miles including Badakshan and Kafiristan, with a population of about five million souls. It is bounded on the north by Russian Turkestan, on the west by Persia and on the east and south by Kashmir, India and Baluchistan. The chief importance of this country in modern times is due to its position as a buffer state wedged in as it is between the two great Empires of Asiatic Russia and British India. The definite boundaries of Afghanistan were determined at various periods. The Russian Afghan Boundary Commission of 1881-86 resulted in the delimitation and mapping of the northern frontiers, the Palmer Commission settled its northern border and finally the Perso-Baluch Commission of 1901-05 defined its western face."¹

Afghanistan is largely a country of mountains and deserts, but there are wide tracts, highly irrigated and most productive, where fruit is grown in such abundance as to become an important item of its export trade. The following extract from the Hon Mountstuart Elphinstone's "Account of the Kingdom of Cabul," published in 1815, though it may be considered to-day a little exaggerated, yet in the main can be termed quite true as regards fruits in Afghanistan are concerned:—

¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 13th Edition.

"The people derive a great luxury from the prodigious abundance of fruit. At Caubul, grapes are dear when they sell more than a farthing a pound; pomegranates are a little more than a half penny a pound, apples sell at two hundred pounds a rupee (£ 1-4-4) two sorts of apricots are equally cheap, and the dearer sorts are less than a half penny a pound; peaches are dearer, but quinces and plums are cheap; and melons much cheaper, grapes often bear scarce any price and the coarse sort, which is exported with so much care to India, is sometimes given to cattle. Nuts of all kinds are very cheap, and walnuts, with which the hills north of Caubul are covered, sell at two thousand for a rupee. The price of vegetables is also extremely low. The smallest piece of copper money, much less than a half penny, purchases ten pounds of spinage, twenty five of cabbage, and of carrots, turnips, pumpkins, or cucumbers. Coriander seeds, turmeric and ginger also sell extremely cheap. Ice or rather snow, is to be had in Caubul, during the summer for a mere trifle. It is dearer at Candahar, but still within the reach of the poorest people. A favourite food at that season is fulodeh, a jelly strained from boiled wheat, and eaten with the expressed juice of fruits and ice, to which cream also is sometimes added."

The Afghans are expert agriculturists and make profitable use of all natural resources of water supply as practical engineers, their only rivals being the Chinese.

1 The Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone, *An account of the Kingdom of Caubul*, London, 1815, p. 231

The climate of Afghanistan is very changing indeed. In his commentaries the Emperor Babar writes "The cold and hot countries are very near to each other at this place. One day's journey from Caubul you may find a place where snow never falls, and, in two hours journey, a place where the snow scarcely ever melts. The air is delightful. I do not believe there is another place like Caubul in the world. One cannot sleep there in summer without a posteen. (a) In winter, though there is so much snow, the cold is not excessive. Samarcand and Tauris are famous for their climate, but they are not to be compared to Caubul. The fruits of cold climates, grapes, pomegranates, apricots, apples, quinces, peaches, pears, plums, almonds, and walnuts are abundant. (b) I planted a cherry tree myself at Caubul, it grew very well, and was thriving when I left it. Oranges and citrons come in plenty from Lughmaun." ¹

Whereas Ghazni, Banuan and Paghman were beautifully cool even in the month of August, I found Kabul, Jalalabad and Kandahar rather hot during the day time. During the winter season which starts in Afghanistan from the middle of October, it snows heavily and many parts of Afghanistan are so cold that it becomes unbearable to stay there. It is recorded in history that in 1750 when Ahmed Shah Abdally was retreating from Persia in

one night at Kafar Kala he lost 18,000 men through frost bite.

There is a close comparison between Afghanistan and Scotland. "In both lands we find the centre of the country occupied by an agglomeration of mountain ranges shading away into hilly undulations which run down to broad, well watered plains and wastes like Registan and Dasht-i-Margo. The climate, is much the same; a clan system, governed by predatory chiefs is practically the same in both countries. There is a river running right along the northern border of Afghanistan for a distance of 330 miles called Oxus, or Amu Daria, which greatly affects the life of the entire country. It has its rise in the Pamir region and falls into the Sea of Aral after running a course of more than 1,400 miles. Its navigation has been the subject of much surmise since 1875, when a steamer succeeded in steaming up as far as Nukus. The Russian Government equipped a small flotilla, which still patrols it under Bolshevist auspices. The journey between Patta Hissar and Charjui takes from seven to ten days according to the size of the vessel" ¹

In parts of the country are to be found Mineral resources such as Salt, Sulphur, iron, lapis-lazuli, and ruby.

"The largest Afghan towns have the following varying population - Kabul, 100,000; Kandahar, 60,000; Herat, 121,000, Mazar-i-Sharif, 46,000. The entire country is divided administratively into nine equal parts. The five major provinces are those

¹ Sardar Ikbal Ali Shah, *Afghanistan of the Afghans*, London, 1928, pp 911.

of Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Mazari-Sharif and Kataghan-Badakhshan, while the four minor divisions are Jalalabad, Khost, Farah, and Maimana."¹

It is a well-known fact that the climate has a great bearing on the temperament and physique as well as religion of a nation. Mrs. Lihon A. Starr in her "Tales of Tirah and Lesser Tibet," describes the Afghans as

"Fierce and lawless, wild and masterless, yet in their reckless fashion brave—true highlanders with an inborn love of fighting, and a pluck and hardiness one cannot but admire."²

Elphinstone in his "Account of the Kingdom of Caubul" says about the Afghans

"The Afghans themselves exult in the free spirit of their institutions. Those who are little under the royal authority, are proud of their independence, which those under the King (though not exposed to the tyranny common in every other country in the east) admire, and fain would imitate. They all endeavour to maintain, that 'all Afghans are equal,' which, though it is not, nor ever was true, still shows their notions and their wishes. I once strongly urged to a very intelligent old man of the tribe of Meeankhail, the superiority of a quiet and secure life under a powerful monarch, to the discord, the alarms, and the blood, which they owed

¹ *op cit.* pp 17, 18.

² p 30

to their present system. The old man replied with great warmth, and thus concluded an indignant harangue against arbitrary power, 'We are content with discord, we are content with alarms, we are content with blood, but we will never be content with a master.'"¹

The following description of the character of the Afghans in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, though it may not apply to the educated Afghans yet in the main may be described as true :—

"The Afghans, inured to bloodshed from childhood, are familiar with death, and audacious in attack, but easily discouraged by failure; excessively turbulent and unsubmissive to law or discipline; apparently frank and affable in manner, specially when they hope to gain some object, but capable of the grossest brutality when that hope ceases. They are unscrupulous in perjury, treacherous, vain and insatiable, passionate in vindictiveness, which they will satisfy at the cost of their own lives and in the most cruel manner. Nowhere is crime committed on such trifling grounds, or with such general impunity, though when it is punished the punishment is atrocious. Among themselves the Afghans are quarrelsome, intriguing and distrustful, estrangements and affrays are of constant occurrence; the traveller conceals and misrepresents the time and direction of his journey. The Afghan is by breed and nature a bird

¹ *op. cit.* 174.

of prey If from habit and tradition he respects a stranger within his threshold, he yet considers it legitimate to warn a neighbour of the prey that is afoot, or even to overtake and plunder his guest after he has quitted his roof. The repression of crime and the demand of taxation he regards alike as tyranny The Afghans are eternally boasting of their lineage, their independence and their prowess They look on the Afghans as the first nations, and each man looks on himself as the equal of any Afghan.”¹

The educated Afghans are very polite and polished in their ways and look so mild that one hardly can compare them with the wilder tribes of the Afghans, of which we have been hearing so much, but the former are smaller in number, naturally

Amongst the products of Afghanistan, carpets made near Herat engage our special attention. Elphinstone says, “There is a kind made near Herat which excels all others, I ever saw; they are made of wool, but so fine and glossy, and dyed with such brilliant colours, that they appear to be of silk, carpets of highly wrought shawl are also used but this piece of magnificence must be very rare from the enormous expense.

“Mullah Jaffer of Seestaun had a shawl carpet of great size, with separate pieces for sitting on, which was bespoke for Shaah Mahmood, and which was bought for a quarter of its price after that prince was dethroned. Moollah

Jaffer asked £ 10,000 for it. which he said was far below its value : he intended to try to sell it at the courts of Persia and Russia and if he failed to cut it up and sell it in pieces to the Turks." ¹

There are some beautiful horses to be seen in various parts of Afghanistan and I had a great mind to purchase one or two for myself but I was told their export is entirely forbidden and the only way I could bring them out to India would be to ride on them all the way to Peshawar, a task I did not think worthwhile performing.

¹ *op. cit* p. 262.

Afghanistan, more than any other part of Persia, was the earliest seat of the ancient Parsi dynasties of the Pishdadians and Kaianians and of Zoroastrian culture and civilization. Eastern Iran was the seat of pre-Zoroastrian and Zoroastrian activities as western and southern regions of the country were during the Achaemenian and Sasanian periods.

The first chapter of the Vendidad enumerates some of the most important cities created by Ahura Mazda. Bakhddi, later Balkh, is the chief capital city spoken of as "the city of lofty banners floating from high walls." It had risen to such eminence that it won the proud title of "Mother of Cities." Masudi perpetuates the Avestan tradition when he speaks of Balkh as beautiful. The popular epithet by which it comes to be known at later period is Bami, "the exalted or shining." Tradition variously puts forth the names of several Pishdadian and Kaianian kings as its reputed founders. Zoroaster is associated with Bactria, the Greek form of Avestan Bakhddi and Old Persian Bakhtri, by both the modern and Greek writers. The classical writers speak of Zoroaster as the Magian King of Bactria. After ten years of futile prophetic propaganda, the prophet ultimately met with success at the royal court of Gushtasp, the then ruling king at Balkh. It was at his court that the messenger of Ahura Mazda preached his new faith and won over the king and his royal consort to his sacred cause. According to Firdausi and other

Muslim writers the sacred fire Nubahar was established at Balkh and when Lohrasp abdicated his throne in favour of his son Gushtasp, he retreated to this temple to pass his days in prayer and meditation. And it was in the holy precincts of this temple that Lohrasp was done to death and the sacred fire extinguished, when the Turanians stormed Balkh while Iran was engaged in the holy war with Arjasp. The prophet himself was stabbed in the same city. Balkh continued to be in the hands of the Iranians upto the downfall of the Sasanians in the middle of the seventh century.

The modern capital Kabul is known to the Avestan writers as Vaekereta and is known by its Pahlavi name Kavul in the treatise Shatroiha-i-Airan, or Cities of Iran. The Vendidad speaks of the river Haetumant, modern Helmand, the chief river of Afghanistan. Saoshyant or the Zoroastrian Saviour, who according to tradition, will appear at the Millennium to usher in the Renovation of the world, is to be born in the region of the lake Kansaoya, modern Hamun. Zoroastrianism prevailed in Afghanistan upto the downfall of the Sasanian empire in the middle of the seventh century. The spade of the explorer has yet to reach the Bactrian soil which was the seat of the Kaiamians in the earliest period of the history of the country, and it may be hoped that some day, under more settled times, Archaeological finds in the shape of some inscriptions or tablets, pottery or bricks, stone or

bronze implements, may throw some light on the history of that remote period.

Zabulistan and Seistan figure most prominently as the home of the warrior heroes of the House of Sam. Zal had married Rodabeh, the beautiful daughter of Mīhrab, the King of Kabul, and Rustom the matchless hero, was born unto them. The heroes of Zabul were the constant supporters of the kings and peoples of Iran. They had risen to such power by their prowess and patriotic service as to be king-makers. Sam and Zal and Rustom and other valiant members of the illustrious House fought and died for them.

Historically speaking, Afghanistan in its earliest period of history has as great an importance for the Parsis as Persia.¹

¹ See also J. J. Modi, *The Afghanistan of the Amīr and the Ancient Mazdayasnans in Asiatic Papers*, Part III, pp. 215-224, Bombay, 1927.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN

Scholars have tried in vain to trace the genealogy of the mixed conglomeration of nationalities that form the people of Afghanistan. The Afghans themselves trace their genealogy from different sources. The Durani Afghans call themselves Ben-i-Israel (children of Israel) and insist on their descent from the tribes who were carried away captives from Palastine to Medea by King Nebuchadnezzar. They trace themselves from King Saul, who they say, had a son called Jeremiah, from whose son Afghana they call themselves Afghans. They further state that a pious man called Kais was sent in deputation to Mahmud who had just declared himself the Prophet of Islam and who soon converted Kais into a Mahommedan and he in his turn on his return to his country turned the whole tribe into Mahommedans. On the contrary others have a tradition that they are descended from Sulehman or Solomon, whereas some believe they are descended from the Egyptian Pharaohs, while some others trace their genealogy still further and believe themselves to be the descendants of Zohak, the legendary usurper King of Persia, depicted in the great Persian Epic, Shah Namah, the beautiful composition of Firdausi. This king is supposed to have had two snakes hanging from each of his shoulders who were never appeased until they were given each a brain of a man every day which resulted in Zohak killing so many of his subjects that they eventually rose in a rebellion under a blacksmith, Kavah who

ultimately joined forces with King Faridun who defeated Zohak and imprisoned him for life. However, several European scholars are inclined to give credence to the belief that the Afghans are really Ben-i-Israel from the fact that many of the men and women in that country possess remarkable Jewish types and features

However, leaving the task of genealogy of the Afghans to the scholars, we know for certain that from very ancient times Afghanistan has been the seat of wars and upheavals. Alexander the Great, Timur, the Lame, Mahmud of Ghazni, Babar, the first Mogul Emperor, Nadirshah, the Persian, and Jengiz Khan, all in their turn have marched through Afghanistan on to their campaigns in India. After the death of Timur, the Lame, who not only possessed Afghanistan but a greater portion of Northern India, his Kingdom fell to pieces and there were quarrels and bickerings between his twenty-seven sons and between the leaders of several small and big tribes of that country, the offshoot of which was that somewhere in 1800 Shah Shuja proclaimed himself ruler of Afghanistan. It is but natural that the British should expect the rulers in Afghanistan to be friendly with them with a view to prevent the other great power on the North, viz Russia from encroaching upon the borders of India through Afghanistan. As such in 1809, in consequence of the intrigues of Napoleon Bonaparte with Persia, the British sent a mission to the court of Shah Shuja headed by the Hon Mountstuart Elphinstone, subsequently, Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay.

This was the first time the Afghans ever made acquaintance with Englishmen. The mission was well received and after a short stay in Afghanistan returned successfully to India. Things went fairly smoothly till 1836 when Dost Mahommed Khan put himself at the head of the country of the Afghans. In 1837 the Persian siege of Herat and the proceedings of Russia created uneasiness and Lieut. Alexander Burns (afterwards Sir Alexander Burns) who had visited Kabul on his way to Bokhara in 1832, was sent by the Governor-General in India as resident to Dost Mahommed's Court at Kabul in 1837. But the terms which the Amir sought were not conceded by the British Indian Government and as such it was resolved to re-establish Shah Shuja who had been long a refugee in the British Territory in India.

This resulted in the First Afghan War. Sir John Keen with an army of 21,000 men advanced through the Bolan Pass on to Kandahar and took that city with practically no opposition and Shah Shuja was crowned in his grand father's Mosque in April 1839. Ghazni was reached on the 25th July and the gate of the city was blown open and the place was taken by storm. Dost Mahommed, finding his troops deserting him, fled to the Hindu Kush and Shah Shuja entered the capital on August 7th 1839. The result was naturally supposed to be successful and Sir John Keen, who was subsequently made a Peer, returned to India with a considerable part of the forces, leaving behind 8,000 men besides the Shah's forces with Sir W. Macnaghten as envoy and

Sir Alexander Burns as his colleague. Shah Shuja began collecting taxes from the Afghans and raising soldiers from among the troops. As it can naturally be supposed, a freedom loving people born with mountain spirit in them, would not brook interference by a foreign power and as such they rose in rebellion in 1841 and killed Sir Alexander Burns and his soldiers Akbar Khan, the son of Dost Mahommed, who had put himself at the head of the Afghans called a conference in December 23rd of the same year to which Sir W Macnaghten was invited to settle the terms, but was murdered by the Prince's own hands On the 6th January 1842 after a convention to evacuate the country had been signed, the British garrison still numbering 14,500 soldiers of whom 690 were Europeans with some 12,000 followers marched out of the Afghan camp The winter was severe, the troops were demoralised, the march was a mass of confusion, so that the force was finally overwhelmed in the pass of Jug-Dalak between Kabul and Jalalabad Of those who left Kabul only one by name Dr Brydon was able to reach Jalalabad wounded and half dead to carry the tale of woe to his comrades there This naturally resulted in the British avenging themselves on the Afghans for those foul murders

General Knott with General Pollock and General Sale, retook several cities of Afghanistan and after dismantling Ghazni and destroying the citadel and central bazaar of Kabul, finally evacuated Afghanistan in December 1842,

In 1868, Shere Ali Khan became the ruler of Afghanistan. He seemed to be more friendly toward the British than his predecessors and in 1869 a meeting was arranged at Ambala where Lord Mayo met him and made a peace treaty by which Shere Ali Khan was acknowledged to be the Ruler of Afghanistan and the British agreed to keep him independent in his territory and to give him every help in case of foreign aggression. On his part, Shere Ali Khan agreed to remain friendly with the British. In 1873, when Russians took Khiva and threatened to proceed on the Afghan borders, Shere Ali became nervous and applied to the British for help by virtue of the treaty made in 1869 at Ambala. Somehow the help did not come, due probably to Lord Clarendon having been solemnly promised by the Russians to treat Afghanistan as a neutral country and to leave it unmolested and as such Shere Ali's fears were considered rather imaginary. Shere Ali, however, took this attitude of the British to mean that they had no intention of keeping their promise and so he openly made overtures to the Russians with the result that the Russian Government, to counteract the interference of England with their advance on Constantinople, sent an envoy to Kabul with power to make a treaty with the Amir. The British immediately notified Shere Ali from India that a mission would be deputed to Kabul, but he demurred to receiving it and when the British envoy had to return from the Afghan frontier, hostilities were proclaimed by the Viceroy in November 1878 and the Second Afghan War began.

Sir Donald Stuart's force marching through Baluchistan across the Bolan Pass entered Kandahar with practically no resistance while another army passed through the Khyber Pass and took up positions at Jalalabad and other places on the direct road to Kabul. A third force under Sir Frederick Roberts marched upto the high pass leading out of the Kurram into the interior of Afghanistan. These combined forces routed Shere Ali from Kabul who fled to the northern provinces where he died at Mazar-i-Sharif in February 1879. In the course of the next six months there was much desultory skirmishing between the tribes and the British troops who defeated various attempts to dislodge them from the positions they had taken up. But the sphere of British military operations was not materially extended. It was seen that the further they advanced, the more difficult would become their eventual retirement, and the problem was to find a successor to Shere Ali who would be friendly toward the British. In the meantime, Yakub Khan, one of the sons of Shere Ali informed the British that he had succeeded his father at Kabul and accordingly a peace treaty was made at Gandamak in May 1879 by which Yakub Khan was recognised as the Amir and certain outlying tracts of Afghanistan were transferred to the British Government. The Amir placed in its hands the establishment of a British Envoy at Kabul receiving in return a guarantee against foreign aggression. In spite of this amicable settlement, in September 1879, Sir Louis Cavagnari, the British Envoy, was massacred at Kabul along with his staff and escort, and the entire

fabric of friendly alliance went to pieces. A fresh expedition was instantly dispatched across the Shutargarden Pass under Sir Frederick Roberts (Lord Roberts) who defeated the Afghans at Charasia near Kabul and entered the city in October. Yakub Khan who had surrendered was sent to India and the British Army remained in military occupation of the District around Kabul until December 1879 when there was another rebellion which however was put down. The British now began to look out for another suitable ruler in Afghanistan who would be prepared to keep peace with them and their eyes were turned to Abdur Rahman, the son of the late Amir Shere Ali's elder brother, who had been an exile for ten years with the Russians. He came back in 1880 across the Oxus and gradually began establishing himself in the northern provinces of Afghanistan. Tribe after tribe was conquered by him till he had made himself practically the ruler of Afghanistan. Meanwhile negotiations were being skilfully carried on with him by the British who eventually acknowledged him as the Amir of Afghanistan and he was proclaimed to be the ruler of the Afghans. A peace was made, which lasted long, by virtue of which he was to receive annually from the British twelve lakhs of Rupees, subsequently raised to Eighteen lakhs, in return for which the Amir promised to be friendly with the British and refer to them any question regarding foreign aggression. The British, on the other hand, promised to help him in case of any foreign encroachment on his territory. It would take a volume to describe the various activities of Amir Abdur Rahman who, till his

death on the first of October 1901, proved himself a faithful friend of the British. I might, however, touch on one or two points pertaining to his life.

His punishments were very severe, indeed. Robbers and thieves used to have their hands cut off and the stumps dipped into boiling oil. The following from "Through the heart of Afghanistan" by Emil Trinkler may be of interest to the readers

"During our stay in Kabul we hired a stall whose owner was an old Afghan. He had previously been guilty of some offence, but his punishment had been to have his eyes sewn up. How this cruel process was carried out one can easily imagine, but that a surgical needle was not used goes without saying, later the eyelids were again cut open. He wore a large pair of horn rimmed, smoked spectacles, at one time as a protection to the eyes and then to hide his disfigured eyes. Thornton tells us another interesting story in his book, "Notes from an Afghan Scrap Book". A certain baker was one day brought up before the Amir, (Abdur Rahman) for selling bread under weight. On that particular day the Amir happened to be in a good frame of mind, he called the baker an impostor and then said to him, "No man can make headway in this world unless he is honest, go and work according to the words of Koran". A few weeks later the same man was brought up before the King for the same complaint. On this occasion the Amir said, "You are not only a deceiver but a rogue. You will pay a fine of 3,000 rupees, 3,000 annas, 3,000 pies (about £ 210). This punishment will be so severe for you that you will never have to come before

me again." However, a few months later, this same man was again brought up before the Amir, on which occasion he was not in a trifling mood. He said to him, "Come here, my friend, you are a baker?" "Yes, Sahib," he answered. "And your loaves are not the prescribed size?" "No, Sahib." "Then there must be too much room in your oven." And in a passionate fit of temper the Amir shouted, "Take him away and roast him in his own stove." This order was at once carried out.

"On returning home one night I heard that one of the Italians in the State service had shot an Afghan policeman. For a small offence, some said that he had struck a Post Office official on the ear, others that he had refused to pay money to a tonga driver because he considered the charge excessive—he was to be brought up before the Police of the Kotwali—the Chief of Police Piperno, as the Italian was called, did not wish to be led through the streets like an ordinary prisoner and refused to go. When the police tried to take him there forcibly he tore himself away and locked himself in his room, whereupon they tried to storm the house. In his excitement Piperno fired through the wooden door, which the police were trying to break down with their bayonets, and shot one of them mortally. The police finally broke through the door and dragged him off to the police station. He was then put in a dark cell in solitary confinement, and after lengthy proceedings was condemned to death. An appeal was made to higher authorities, but they confirmed the sentence.

"One morning a servant came to us and

asked permission to go and see the Italian stoned to death, the execution of the sentence was, however, postponed. There was only one way to avoid this, and that was by purchasing the murderer. The dreadful price was about 7,000 to 10,000 rupees (£ 450 to £ 650) and there was, further, a sum of 15,000 rupees (£ 1,000) to be paid to the relatives of the deceased, in order to save the blood of the Italian. Sometimes when we were returning home late at night after a walk, we could see a dull flickering light coming from the small dark rooms of the prison. At the entrance stood an Afghan policeman dressed in a dark red uniform, with black facings, and black lambskin woollen cap. Excepting the members of the Legation and the Italian doctors no one was allowed to visit the Italian, and the night time a guard used to sleep in the same room with him. I often pictured to myself what a dreadful time the prisoner must have endured—hours, days and weeks of uncertainty, for when I left Kabul in the autumn he was still in prison. We all hoped at that time that he would soon be set free, but his troubles were not over so soon.

“After I left Afghanistan I heard nothing more of him until in June I saw in the papers that Piperno had been killed. Later I ascertained the following facts. When eventually a figure had been fixed for the redemption money, the Italian was led to the place of execution where he was made to kneel down and was handed over by the judge to the friend of the dead man. He drew his long knife and threw it on to the ground, saying, ‘An Afghan will

not soil his hand with the blood of an heathen' According to Afghan law, Piperno ought to have been imprisoned for another ten years. One can quite understand that he eventually tried to escape and succeeded by bribing his gaolers, he is said to have reached the frontier, but there he collapsed. Not knowing the language, full of troubles and worries, low in spirit, he gave himself up of his own accord to the Afghan authorities, who again brought him back to prison in Kabul. There he stayed for a few days, after which they took him out quietly and executed him. The Europeans and the Italian Legation only learnt about the execution when it was all over." ¹

It is said that when once somebody suggested to Abdur Rahman whether his was not the iron rule, he is said to have replied "Yes, it is so, but I have also to deal with iron people." In other words he had to subdue a wild tribe who knew no obeisance either to man or king. In his own memoir he writes. "On many occasions I get quite discouraged on account of the misbehaviour of my people, who keep on rebelling, quarrelling and intriguing against each other and making false reports of each other to me. I get very weary and sometimes think that their position is unchangeable and their intrigues incurable, and that it is impossible to raise them to that standard which would make them equal to their neighbours in strength and character. I feel that it would be well for me to retire from this life of everlasting anxiety and struggle and take a quiet, peaceful life somewhere else, leaving

1 *Through the Heart of Afghanistan* by Emil Trinkler, p. 201
London, 1928.



Amir Abdur Rahman, Grand father of Amanullah Khan and the most Powerful King to rule over whole of Afghanistan



Amir Habibullah Khan, father of Amanullah, who was mysteriously shot dead while on a Shikar expedition at Jalalabad

my people to fight against themselves until they are ruined ' 1

He was indeed a born soldier and a hard worker. He gave of himself in his memoirs: "I am always ready as a soldier on the march to a battle in such a manner that I can start without any delay in case of emergency. The pockets of my coat and trousers are always filled with loaded revolver and one or two loaves of bread for one day's food, the bread is changed every day. Several guns and swords are always kept by the side of my bed or the chair on which I am seated within the reach of my hand and saddled horses are always kept ready in front of my office not only for myself but for all my courtiers and my personal attendants at the door of my Durrbar room. I have also ordered that a considerable number of gold coins should be sewn into the saddles of my horses when required for a journey and on both sides of the saddles are two revolvers. I think it is necessary in such a warlike country that the sovereign, and especially a sovereign who is a soldier on the field of battle, though my country is perhaps more peaceful and safe now than many other countries, still one can never be too cautious and too well prepared " 2

For a further detailed and most interesting account of his life I would refer my readers to his own autobiography translated into English and edited by Mir Munshi Mohd. Khan, Published in 1900 in London by John Murray, Albermarle Street. He was succeeded by his son Habibullah Khan, brave son of

1 *The Life of Abdur Rahman Amir of Afghanistan* Edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan, vol. II, p. 43

2 *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 99

a brave father, who had unfortunately but a short life. Plots and counter-plots were being made against him and on the 20th February 1919 while on a hunting expedition, he was shot dead under suspicious circumstances, at Jallalabad.

Some put this on to his brother and some to his own youngest son, Amanullah Khan, but nothing for certain is known to the outside world except a few of the Afghans, who were actually in these wild plots against their own king. Be it as it may, young Amanullah did prove himself to be a favourite of the arch-plotters and he succeeded to the throne of Afghanistan having imprisoned his elder brother, the rightful heir to the throne, Anayatullah Khan, who subsequently became three-days king as will be seen in the last chapter.

Amanullah Khan, immediately after his accession to the throne under mysterious circumstances, wanted to be entirely independent unlike his grand father and his father and, with this aim in view, he declared war against the British in March 1919. The great war had hardly ended and England having lost much of its precious blood and money was reluctant to enter into a fresh skirmish of however small a nature, she therefore acceded to his terms and allowed him to remain an independent ruler of Afghanistan. To commemorate this great event, the king held a great feast at Paghman which is his summer seat, some eighteen miles away from Kabul, and there, for eight days people of the whole of Afghanistan gathered together and enjoyed to their hearts' content. This feast was known in Afghanistan as Jashn-e-hingham-e-Istakhalah of which more in succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER IV

KARACHI TO KABUL

In commemoration of the great event of the Jashn-e-Ilqham-e-Istakhalah (meaning the ceremony of the Observance of the Day of Independence) described in the preceding chapter, Amanaullah Khan held since 1919 at Paghman, his Summer seat a great feast. The time fixed was August (in my case it was the 16th of August) when the climate of Afghanistan is at its best and when flowers and fruits are in abundance. Partly with a view to exploring a new field for my business and partly with a view to realise personally the beauties of this fascinating country, I applied for my passport at Karachi. At first I had decided to motor out the whole of my trip round Afghanistan from Karachi via Lasbela and Quetta to Chaman and thence to Kandahar, Ghazni, Kabul and back to India via the Khyber Pass and Peshawar. This plan however I had to give up, as for more than a fortnight I could not get any reply definitely about my passport, as in the usual routine the Commissioner in Sind has to apply to the Governor of Bombay and he in his turn applies to the Viceroy and then the reply filters through the same channel *vice versa*. However, after patient waiting for a fortnight I suddenly got a phone message from the Commissioner's office that my passport was ready. This was on the afternoon of the 10th of August 1928 and I had to reach Kabul by the morning of the 16th of that month to see the opening ceremony of the Day of Observance of

Independence of Afghanistan. Naturally therefore I had to change my plans and in great haste I got my few clothings and necessary articles together and started on the evening of the 11th August for Peshawar to go to Kabul straight from there instead of via Kandahar and Ghazni.

What was my surprise when I found a telegram awaiting me at Peshawar informing me that I must obtain sanction of the Afghan Consul at Simla before I could proceed to Kabul. This was most disappointing as it meant at least eight days more by which time the festivities at Kabul would have been over. But luckily on making enquiries at the Afghan Consulate at Peshawar, I was assured that there was no need for any such procedure as the Afghan Consul at Karachi had endorsed my passport. I therefore made preparations to leave Peshawar the very next morning and had to turn my Indian money into Afghan coins consisting of Kerans (about 4 annas or 4d.) and Afghanis (about 8 annas or 8d.) We had to take about a couple of canvas water bags, as there are no tanks or pipes on the way but travellers have to fill in their bags wherever they come across a stream of water.

So on the 14th of August 1928, I, at last, started from Peshawar by motor car with two friends, our car being fully loaded with our beddings, trunks, tiffin baskets, musical instruments, fruits, water-bags, etc. It might be mentioned that though we had our own car owned by my friend Mr. N. D. Mullick, there is a Motor Transport Company at Peshawar



**Sardar Anayatullah Khan, the three days King of Afghanistan
who was compelled to give way to Baccha-e-Saqa**



**A view of the famous Khyber pass. Note the beautiful motor
road made by the British Government**

with its head office in Kabul, which owns a monopoly for carrying passengers and cargo by motor cars and motor busses to and fro, and whose charges are fairly reasonable. Besides, the travellers, new to the country and its language, have distinct advantage in availing themselves of the services of the Motor Transport Co., especially when they are new to the country and its language.

After a fast run of nearly an hour we came to the fort of Jamrud where our passports were checked and we had to pay a toll on our motor of Rs. 4 (6 shillings,) and of Re 1 per every man in our motor. We soon entered the historic Khyber Pass, the most ancient and the most difficult highway of Asia "This pass has never ceased to figure in the history of both war and peace Even prior to thirteen hundred years ago there is proof of the fact that the army of Alexander the Great crossed this way to India The Buddhist monks followed in the wake of those warlike Grecian legions Then came Nadir Shah, the Persian, crossing its rocky defiles and returning through it from the Golden Hindustan laden with all the jewels of India. Lastly Ahmedshah Durani returned to Afghanistan after sacking the fair fields of its neighbouring country"¹ The beautiful broad and smooth roads, one for motor cars and the other for caravans, as well as the Khyber railway passing through innumerable tunnels bored through the high and narrow mountains are indeed a tribute to the engineering skill of the British Part of the Khyber railway is constructed

¹ *Afghanistan of the Afghans*, p 227.

in the territory of the Afridis who are prone to hostility on the slightest provocation and whose good-will is secured through a lavish distribution of money to the clansmen. Not much advantage seems to be taken of the railway now that it is so easy to go to the Khyber Pass by motor car within two hours, and it is mainly used for conveying goods and the transport of the relief units at the fort of Jamrud.

We soon passed Ali Musjid, which I visited a second time after nearly eighteen years and found it so changed with the new and smooth roads and the safety of the passage that I could hardly recognise it. In fact when I went to see the Khyber Pass as a school boy, eighteen years ago, there were no motors nor any railway but one had to go by common Tongas (two wheeled carriages) and the trip took a whole day. Besides, the road was not altogether safe and only two days in a week, (Tuesdays and Fridays) were kept open for visitors, as on those days caravans came from Kabul to Peshawar and at every post at a distance of about half a mile two or three armed sentries were kept for the safety of both the passengers and the caravans. It appeared so strange then to me to find one could go round the Khyber whenever one chose without the least fear of molestation of any sort or without the slightest preparation for one's safety. This naturally means that the British Power in Khyber since I last visited it has been most firmly established.

Passing the Khyber we rounded near fort of Shagar and soon came to Landi Kotal Our passports



Some of the Zakakhel Tribesmen of the Afghan Hill
Fancy some of these men wanting to change their
turbans for felt hats, their baggy trousers for
plus fours and their rifles for swagger sticks



A beautiful bridge near Jalalabad on River Kabul

leaves *Torkam*, the first Afghan outpost near Landikhana, a phone message is sent to Dakka to the customs' men giving the motor car number so that a check is kept on every motor and every buss that enters Afghan borders.

It would take long to describe various formalities which we had to pass through and the leisure with which the work was being done, but suffice it to say we were delayed for over an hour and a half for the work which in any European country would hardly have taken more than twenty minutes. It was sunset when we left Dakka for Jalalabad where we intended spending the night. We went at a rapid space through rough and dusty road for an hour or so with nothing but mountains around us as far as eyes can reach, till we came to a Serai at a place called Bhatikote or Sayad Mukhtad Badshah's Serai. Several motor lorries and bullock carts stood blocking the way. On enquiry we were told that as it was growing dark and there was fear of highwaymen on the way we could only proceed with the permission of the head of the village who was responsible to the King of Afghanistan for the safety of travellers passing through his village. We searched out this venerable Sayad, living not far from the Serai, and asked for his permission to push on to Jalalabad. He came out of his house in company with other men and gave us a courteous reply and willingly permitted us to proceed on to Jalalabad. He also offered us services of his two armed men for our safety on the way. Our chauffeur, a timid Hindu, was however so much frightened by the other chauffeurs of the

We hastily put on our overcoats and dashing cold water over our sleepy faces to keep ourselves awake, jumped down from the top of the roof and by about half past five in the morning we were on our way to Jalalabad.

At about eight o'clock in the morning of the 15th we reached Jalalabad after crossing a few rough bogs and through the kindness of the British Consul, a Mohammedan by name Khan Sahib Jehangir Khan (now Khan Bahadur) we had some tea and biscuits and fresh water to wash ourselves with. We had a pleasant little chat with the rather bulky friend of ours who looked a picture of health probably due to less worry and more leisure, and after having taken a photograph of his bungalow and of himself we again dashed along the road to Kabul.

About twenty miles away from Jalalabad there comes a nice little place called Nimla, surrounded by lovely avenue of green trees. It has a very nice Dak Bungalow where fairly good accommodation could be had, also food and drink, and for those who have no other acquaintance in Jalalabad that is the only halting place after leaving Dakka, either at night or day time.

The Afghan wayfairers wear a tremendous lot of nails in their heavy boots and these give way to the rough stones on the road with the result that motor tyres are punctured so often that in spite of our best efforts we had a feeling that Kabul would not be reached the same day. We passed Fateh Abad Bazaar

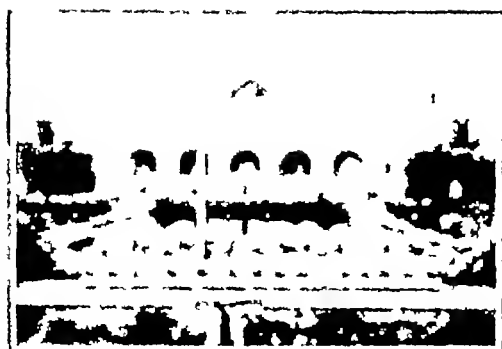


FIGURE 1. THE LANDSCAPE OF THE
 TOWN OF THE FUTURE
 (1910-1915)



FIGURE 2. THE TOWN OF THE FUTURE
 (1910-1915)

and Serai, also Sukh Pool where we had to pay a toll of two Kerans for our car. At Kulah, a small village we waited for our lunch. The wayside inn was a wretched little place where we got some boiled eggs and *Naan* and made the best we could of our meagre and unpalatable lunch. While lunching, I saw a man of the inn emptying a ken of oil which naturally greased his hands. He promptly rubbed these into another fellow's head and cleaned them dry so that while he found a supposed towel for his greasy hands the other found oil for his hair. Laughingly we left the inn and darted for Kabul but night overtook us as we anticipated and we had to stay at the Royal Dak Bunglow or Guest House at a place called Bami Kio. The keeper of the Dak Bunglow was out at Paghman for the holiday and fortunately the outside verandah of the house was open for us to stay the night over. A man was sent to the nearest village to bring a fowl and some eggs and my cook gave us some sort of a fowl for dinner after two hours' hard work on the fire made in crude way in open air. All throughout, the food on the way was very unsatisfactory, as these villages are seldom proper places to look for them, but we being new to Kabul road and our tyres unused to the rough stones and the Afghan villagers' nails being merciless, we were naturally kept hanging for two days on the road and had to make the best of it. All night we heard terrible howling of wolves, and on the early morning of the 16th August we again started for our destination and at about ten o'clock came to a place called Boot-e-Khak. We had to halt there for Octroi

again and to appease our hunger we bought some lovely melons and made a nice meal of them. These mellons are called *gharmaa*, in Afghan language and are really very delicious. They are not obtainable in India but another species called *sardaa* obtainable in India (of course not so good as the *gharmaas*) cost nearly a rupee, whereas these, we had for three annas at Boot-e-Khak.

A man was sent along with us from the customs to take us to a place for taxing our luggage and he quietly sat on the mud-guard of our car till he brought us safely to the Custom House of the longed for city of Kabul.

CHAPTER V

THE TWO CAPITALS—ANCIENT AND MODERN

It was a quaint looking place reached through rather narrow streets and the motor car was driven through a big gate right into a huge compound where it took a turn and returned alongside the gate. Several Afghan officers of the Customs came out and ordered the whole of our luggage to be untied and brought before them. One after another they began searching our beddings, trunks, portmanteaus, etc., lest we smuggled cigarettes, liquors, and similar other dutiable articles. My portable typewriter was valued at what I do not know, but I was asked to pay Rs. 200 for it (about £15). It was in vain I argued with the Customs appraiser who was ill-informed as to the prices of the articles manufactured in foreign countries but eventually I had to leave my typewriter at the Custom House on the understanding that when I returned back to India, I would take it with me. This saved me from fabulous duty. My friend had a *Dilruba* (a stringed Indian instrument) on which they wanted to assess fourteen Afghans or Rs. 7/8 as duty. Rather than risking the instrument by allowing it to remain in the Custom House, my friend paid the duty, though in the end when the matter was brought to the notice of some other influential Afghan friends, they managed to get us a refund. My other friend had an instrument for physical culture which evidently the Afghans had never heard of nor seen and they wanted the package to be opened. To their surprise my friend brought

out a portable gramophone on which we put one of the records for exercises and began taking steps to the [music which greatly amused the Customs appraisers and eventually they let us off without duty on those, as, if they found ample compensation in the fun they had out of the music and our dancing. The duty ranged from 20% to 200%. For instance, on petrol, cigarettes and biscuits, etc., 200% was charged. On oilman stores 21% was charged out of which 1% was credited to the Education Fund Account. Naturally owing to these excessive duties things were rather expensive at Kabul and when we brought this to the notice of some of the leading Afghans, who were in the ministry we were told that the King was trying to modify the schedules of Customs Duty so as to encourage trade in his country.

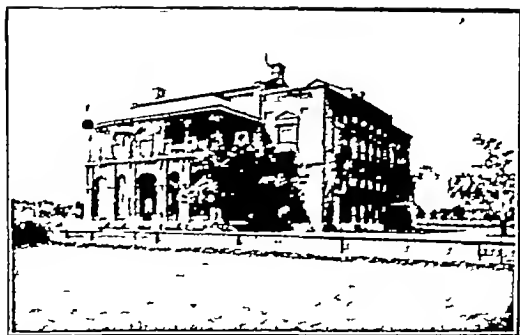
In passing, I might say that the goods imported from India and other countries into Afghanistan by various legations such as, German, French, Italian, Turkish, Persian, Russian, British and so forth, were all exempted from duty. The following from Emil Trinkler's "Through the Heart of Afghanistan" may be of interest to the readers of this book:—

"It was very often unpleasant working at the Custom House. Even when the authorities tried to make matters as easy as possible for us, it was impossible to prevent other buyers and sellers from piling up their goods near ours. It became especially unpleasant when about 50 to 100 leather sacks filled with mutton fat were placed there. In the great heat—the thermometer often rising to about 40 and

the third, namely, Hotel Vali¹ The building of this hotel was quite modern, with arrangements more or less on European style With difficulty we got two rooms between us three, as the hotel was pretty full with visitors from various parts of the world We were charged Rs 8 a day and our food comprised of morning tea, lunch and dinner. The invigorating cool climate of Kabul required more than a mere cup of tea in the morning with a half-boiled egg and some pieces of *Naan*, but fortunately a few steps away from our hotel there was a restaurant opened by an Indian, where we used to enjoy our second cup of tea with pastries, both of which were very delicious As stated previously the Afghans drink green tea without milk which we did not find to our taste.

The city of Kabul is rather a quaint one. There are a few modern buildings built on Russian and German style but otherwise the bulk of the city consists of old styled mud plastered houses The streets were rather dusty though not very dirty and the fashionable quarter was known as Lab-e-Darya. This meant the river side as there was a small rivulet running across in which people bathed and washed their clothes as well as cleaned their animals. Consequently, this fashionable quarter, instead of sending forth cool and delightful air gave out rather obnoxious stench at times and every time we passed

¹ As I am writing this book, my Afghan host at Ghazni, now in Karachi, informs me that the building is blown to pieces by the firing that took place between the soldiers of Amanullah and Baccha e saqa.



One of the four Royal Palaces at Kabul



Beautiful rows of Chinar trees extending over two miles
before entering Paghman, the summer seat of the
Afghan King

through this quarter we felt as if, we were passing through a suage farm. There were a few taxis running but generally tongas or two wheeled carriages pulled by one horse were used. The gariwallas wore European dress with either straw or felt hats and being rather dark in skin they looked almost like Italians. There was but one Cinema in Kabul, a nice big building, but when we saw it, it was in complete ruins having been burnt by a big fire.

There are two or three palaces of the old King, Abdur Rahman and his son, Habibullah Khan, which are worth a visit.

The museum in the huge compound of one of the palaces of the King particularly interested me, as it had a very good collection of ancient curiosities. For instance, there were some fine statues of Greek and Buddhistic period together with innumerable coins of the reigns of the Persian and Roman Kings, all of which clearly showed that Afghanistan had been conquered by Romans, Greeks, Persians, Buddhists, Mongols and so forth. In one place there were wooden men dressed up, which were the relics of ancient times when a tribe of people called Noories were worshipping these idols.

The first clock made in Afghanistan also found a prominent place in this museum, as well as the Koran written in Kufic character which was put in a special room beautifully covered up with glasses and nobody was allowed to enter it, as the Koran is considered most sacred and this particular one was

supposed to have been written by the hands of Usman one of the apostles of Prophet Mohammed.

Some beautiful pistols and axes, with brilliant diamonds and rubies stuck on them, were kept which belonged to the time of the Persians when they were the rulers of Afghanistan

The fountain pen with which the treaty with the British was signed in 1919 by Amanullah declaring himself independent was also given the place of prominence in the museum

There was an armoured coat the whole of which was engraved with the sacred writings of Koran and looked most unique. Probably the warrior was a king who was supposed to be immune from death or injury—if he put on a mail coat of armour with the sacred inscriptions from Koran.

Amongst numerous other interesting and fascinating collections in the museum were to be seen pictures of the Sindhis of far off days in whose contact the Persians, when in Afghanistan, had come, depicting peculiar types of Sindhi top hats. Of course special permit had to be taken before entering into the museum but we had no great difficulty in obtaining the same.

My work in Kabul used to carry me through the bazaar daily. It was a peculiar Eastern bazaar, with narrow dusty lanes, containing small shops on either side, with scarcely any light and fresh air. There were shopkeepers, provision merchants, fruit dealers, Naan

and pillau shops, ironmongers, carpenters, bootmakers, tilters, silversmiths, scent dealers, meat shops, grain shops, sugar and tea merchants, money-lenders and in short the whole of the trade of Afghanistan was carried on in this bazaar. The chief import trade of Afghanistan was of tea, sugar, matches and candles, piecegoods, hardware, machinery, etc. The export trade consisted of carpets made at Herat and other places, hides and skins, as well as beautiful furs and fruits. Fruit was really a fine trade for Afghanistan and but for it the poorer classes would starve as they had very little income and they were so content that they practically subsisted on a big *Naan* or bread worth a pie, and a water-melon, known as *garmaa* in Afghanistan, worth about two annas. These fruits were carried on donkeys, camels and motor cars from Kabul to Peshawar and from Kandahar to Chaman whence they found their way to various towns in India. Like in India, one has to bargain for things for a considerable time in Afghanistan markets. It was generally safe to start with half the price asked for, and though one was refused once or twice by the shopkeepers, they eventually bargained for two-thirds of the price.

The Afghans are a very hospitable nation and several of our friends entertained us to dinners and tea parties. Perhaps it will be interesting to describe one of these dinner parties. A high official once invited us to dinner at his residence in Kabul, situated near the river side, described before as Lab-e-Darya. We were received in an open compound by the host and his friends, where we sat chatting and joking and very

soon afterwards fruits were placed before us consisting of beautiful grapes and water-melons of various types, peaches, apples, etc. Liquor in Afghanistan is totally prohibited, except in the case of the various Legations who have to apply for their requirements to His Majesty's Government, this being the only quantity allowed free of duty in the country, so that ordinarily it is very difficult, if not entirely impossible, to obtain liquor in Kabul. Our friends who were all cultured Afghans, having travelled round several countries of Europe, were naturally Europeanized and were not much averse to imbibe a few drops of strong spirit, which they somehow had managed to procure in our honour. After about an hour's pleasant chatting and fruit eating, we were escorted to the dining room inside the house, the table of which was neatly decorated in modern European style with innumerable little dishes consisting of meat, chillau, pillau,¹ pickles, sweets, dry fruits, celleries and so forth. Everything being readily arranged, the doors were closed and the servants retired leaving the hosts and their guests to themselves undisturbed and unobserved. Before each person two plates, one on top of the other, were placed, so that after having tasted a few dishes on the first plate, it was discarded and the second one was used for remaining food, which was so much in abundance that we could hardly do justice to it. After dinner, as if we had not had enough, we were again brought out in the open compound and treated to some more fruits, tea and coffee. We could see that

1 Chillian and pillau are dishes of rice cooked with clarified butter and in them are mixed pieces of meat, almond, raisins, spices, etc.

the Afghans were excellent eaters and we were highly charmed with their hospitality, which we shall always remember.

The Telegraphs and the Post Offices were also run by the Afghans, and though the King had engaged services of expert Persians and other foreigners, these departments seemed to me still to be in their infancy and we had rather an anxious time when we used to receive telegrams from our people in India to say that our letters had not reached them, while as a matter of fact we used to post our letters twice a week on Indian mail days. The telegrams received too were often mutilated and when we applied to the Telegraph Office, they promised to get the corrections, but it generally took several days before the original message was in any way intelligible. The fact was both the Postal and Telegraph Departments had not come up to the required standards, and though we made enquiries all round, we were never able to ascertain why our letters never reached India for twenty days at a stretch when they ought to have been there within six days as was usually the case. Various reasons were advanced among which some Afghans hinted that our letters were being censored either at Kabul or at Dacca. Some even thought the British were censoring all letters coming from Afghanistan, at Lahore, before delivering them to the addressees in India. Anyhow this has remained a mystery unsolved as yet. Most probably the delay was due to want of proper postal organization.

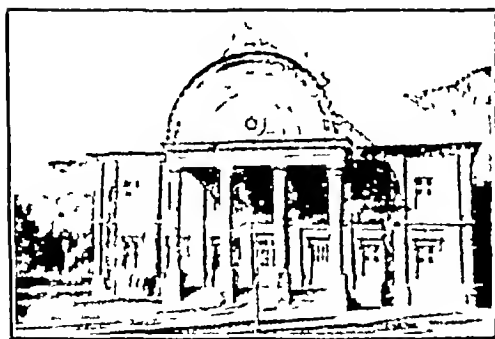
There were some nice schools and colleges in Kabul established by the King, who was extremely keen on the education of boys and girls. Languages taught there, were Persian, French, German and Russian. English was very seldom taught and the teachers and professors were also Persians, Germans and French. The primary education was free and for higher education boys and girls were even paid a small sum and were clothed and fed by way of encouragement, as His Majesty the King believed that in the higher education of boys and girls alone was to be found the salvation of Afghanistan. So many were yearly sent out to the Continent, Turkey, and Persia for education, that I was told it cost the Afghan Government seventy lacs of rupees annually (£ 50,000) for educating, boarding, lodging and clothing the young Afghan students.

It was indeed a pretty sight to see young Afghan girls, some in veil and some without, with neat, white hand-gloves and with European dress and a tin hand-bag containing their books and other paraphernalia, walking at a brisk pace towards their schools, early every morning.

During our saunterings round the town, the mosques at Kabul and Paghman greatly attracted our attention in as much as instead of there being minarets of a peculiarly Eastern style, they seemed to be representing more of the Russian and German style of architecture. They were absolutely modern structures very different from the ordinary mosques one sees in India and what was more, the



Amanullah placing wreath at the Triumphal Arch on the Day
of Independence



A mosque at Parham looking quite like a modern German
architecture

King had changed the Sabbath, which is invariably Friday, in the whole of the Mohammedan world since the time of Mohammed, to Thursday. Considering the religious sentiments of the mountain Afghans, this was no ordinary achievement on the part of the Afghan King. And why this change in the religious belief of the people since centuries? Only with a view to break the power of the illiterate and self-styled Mullahs who did more harm than good to His Majesty's subjects, and it was the firm belief of the King that the sooner his subjects came out of the grip of the all-powerful but ignorant, bigoted and wicked Mullahs, the quicker would they educate and better themselves¹.

The Afghan soldiers did not strike us as particularly smart. This was possibly due to their dress. I noticed all the soldiers having a cheap class of grey-coloured clothes, looking like Indian khadi, with a peculiar kind of Boer hats made of the same material. They were not given any socks, but wore putties on the heavy military boots which were never polished so that the colour very soon turned grey and matched the colour of their uniforms. The officers were certainly smart in their dress which was European, and were very neat in their appearance too, so that they stood in striking contrast to the ordinary soldiers. Their military training was partly Turkish and partly German. But whatever dress they wore, or training they underwent, the Afghans looked certainly a warlike nation.

¹ This was the version given to us by some Afghans in Kabul. But my other Afghan friends inform me that this is a wrong notion. The King's idea was to keep Friday as a Sabbath day, but he made Thursday a holiday for the people, so that they may begin to understand the sanctity of Friday and keep that latter day for prayers and religious observances only.

being imbued with free spirit of their mountain fastness.

Dar-Ul-Aman the new capital city of Afghanistan, to replace the old historic Kabul, was under construction, six miles away from the present capital city, when we saw it. There was a beautiful broad road, about fifty feet wide, running in a straight line for nearly six miles, with fine rows of Chinar trees on either side, and with small drain-like streamlets from which the road was watered every day in the most ingenious Eastern fashion by two persons standing on opposite sides and splashing water on the road with a tin can attached to a long rod and appearing like a sauce pan. On either side of this beautiful broad road were artistic villas of the aristocratic Afghans built in German, Italian and Russian styles, with up-to-date fittings giving to the on-looker very much the appearance of New Delhi. At the extreme end of the road stood a nice little hill in the centre of which was under construction, Amanullah Khan's beautiful palace made of marble, cement and bricks combined on a very artistic German style. There was a beautiful big garden, with lawns and tennis-courts at the back of the palace and the surroundings gave one an impression of Scotland; the only difference being that whereas Scotland is beautifully green and purple with heather, Dar-Ul-Aman looked bleak with scraggy and barren mountains. In this new capital city, there was a magnificent three-storied building which was to be the Secretariat and Parliamentary House for the newly constituted Jirga. There was a beautiful public garden with lovely flowers and lawns where in the evenings young



Sanatorium midway between Kabul and Paghman, where people suffering from Consumption are treated by a Turkish Doctor



The beautiful scenery depicting Kabul River on the way to Bamian

Afghan ladies with their family members strolled round and had tea and light refreshments.

A little railway ran on one side of this broad six-mile long road and carried passengers to and fro, two or three times a day. I was extremely pleased to find a Parsee, a resident of Kabul for the past 35 years, in Dar-ul-Aman who, though he had left Karachi years ago, was speaking his own mother tongue without difficulty and remembered things of the whole of Karachi as accurately as if he had left the city only a few months ago.

Before reaching Dar-ul-Aman proper, a small road turned off on the right to the tomb of the famous Moghul Emperor Baber. The tomb was unpretentious and it appeared much care was needed to prevent its falling to pieces. Below the hills where Baber sleeps the eternal sleep, lies the German Legation.

Between Paghman and Kabul, on a high hill, surrounded by beautiful trees, was a sanatorium for the consumptives. This used to be one of the palatial buildings of the late Amir Habibullah Khan. It had then been turned into a neat and clean little sanatorium, run under a Turkish doctor. The cleanliness inside the building and the various amenities of life provided for these unfortunate victims of consumption, were worthy of high ideals the fallen monarch had set before himself, for the uplift of his country. In Kabul there was also a nice hospital run by Turkish and German doctors, where any one desiring medical treatment was attended to.

CHAPTER VI

PAGHMAN—THE BEAUTIFUL SUMMER SEAT OF AFGHAN ROYALTY

Seven thousand feet above the sea level, some sixteen miles away from the ancient city of Kabul, is situated the beautiful Summer seat of the Afghan Royalty, known as Paghman. It is surrounded by hills on all sides and for two miles before one climbs up the hill, there is a lovely avenue of small Chinar trees. There are bungalows of the aristocrats built in Russian and German style, with gardens in front of them, presenting a most charming sight that any modern first class hill station in India would give us, and yet they all were so different in their designs and structures.

The climate turned cooler and cooler as the motor dashed higher and higher up the hill, and when we entered the Triumphal Arch, most exquisitely decorated for the occasion of the Afghan Independence Day, for the time being I thought I was transported to a Continental city. There were beautiful young girls with modern European dresses with up-to-date shoes, stockings and gloves, and thin coloured veils a little below their eyes, to add to their charms. They looked at us with beautiful big eyes and tender smiles to signify how happy they were to enjoy this newly obtained freedom of going without the Burkha or veils. And yet there were many women with faces completely covered with small



Fountains daily play at Paghman during summer In the evenings,
and lend an artistic effect to the gardens



Triumphal Arch at Paghman, erected In honour of those Afghan
soldiers who laid their lives for the Independence
of Afghanistan

pieces of black veils, though dressed in up-to-date European style. There were strapping young lads, rosy cheeked and fair-skinned with grey eyes that sparkled with delight of the holidays they were about to enjoy, all in European dresses made of course by Kabul tailor, with Kabul made cloth of a rather coarse type. They all wore felt hats made in Kabul and with gloves in their hands and sticks to add to their smartness, they looked indeed like Europeans. The king had forbidden any one entering the main centres of attractions at Paghman with turbans, and even the sweepers were not exempted from this Royal Farman or command. As a result of this we met with but few in real Afghan dress at least in Paghman.

Then there were the emblems of the newly constituted Parliament, called Loi Jirga, with black frock coats and trousers, black felt hats and muled boots, looking like Russian priests. Hand in hand they walked, three or four in a row like school going children looking amazingly at the electric lights and the decorations all round them on arches, trees, buildings, gardens and so forth. It might be added here that most of these Afghans were farmers and villagers staying miles away from the capital city, who had visited beautiful Paghman for the first time, with special European dress forced upon them. Their looks and gait as well as their manners clearly showed they were not an enlightened class, so that all the pomp and decorum they saw round them, was sufficient to mystify them. At any rate, they did command front seats wherever they went, and all

their expenses from the buss upto Cinema performances were defrayed from the Royal Treasury. No doubt then, that they felt a bit elated and thought themselves above their other Afghan brethren.

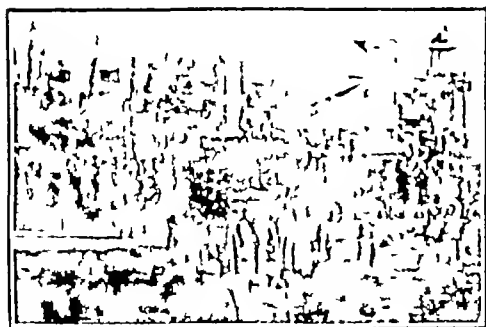
We went straight to Hotel Bahar, a magnificent Hotel constructed on German style, where our friends had engaged a room for us beforehand. There were so many guests from different countries that it was sheer good luck that we got one room even between us three. Beyond three couches and some carpets there was hardly any furniture in our room. We were charged 12 Afghans a day, that is, Rs. 6 per day consisting of morning tea, lunch and dinner. There was no breakfast but a couple of half-boiled eggs, and dried pieces of Naan with green tea, were all we used to get every morning. The lunch and dinner had hardly much variety and they consisted of soup, meat, chillau or pillau and fruits.

The food was always served in European style and the tables too were laid with forks, knives, spoons, etc, as we find in any modern European hotel. The waiters were dressed in white drill suits in European style and they were always very polite and smiling, though it appeared to me, they wanted a more frequent change of clothes than they were actually given, as being white they got dirty in no time.

I was told that the Government ran the hotel and paid something like ten thousand rupees



The Hotel Labat at Fortman. The "X" marks the room occupied by the author.



Amanullah Khan addressing his people on the first day when performing the opening ceremony of the Day of Independence

annually as loss. The manager was supposed to have been sent to Bombay for a couple of years, by the Afghan Government, to learn at the Taj Mahal Hotel how to run the management, and considering the fact that he had to train an entirely ignorant set of Afghan lads who had never seen knives or forks for dinner, nor had they seen any Hotel on European style, the manager must have had the time of his life to have brought them upto the standard I found them, which though not AI was tolerably good. The internal management of the service and the bath, etc., wanted considerable improvement to be called entirely satisfactory, but yet, taken on the whole, and keeping the fact in mind that the whole show was got up only a couple of years ago, I thought there was no justification for grouching.

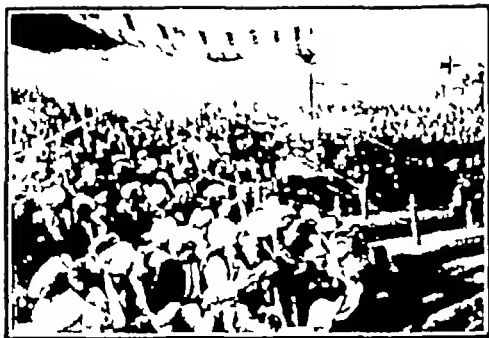
As thousands of people had gathered together at Paghman for the holidays, and holidays indeed they were, for even the post office was topsyturvy for eight days, the Government had pitched small tents by hundreds which were rented to the public on a nominal charge of about a rupee per day. Every tent was filled up by men, women and children, and from early morning till late at night they were busy with the daily programme of amusements. There were cinemas, feats of strength, tennis and cricket matches, firing competitions, fire-works, art and industrial exhibitions, musical performances, circus, carnivals, and innumerable other entertainments, to keep one busy all throughout eight days of the observance of Independence.

For every motor that ran up to Paghman and back to Kabul during these holidays, there was a tax of Rs. 2-8-0 each way, which income went towards meeting a part of the huge expense.

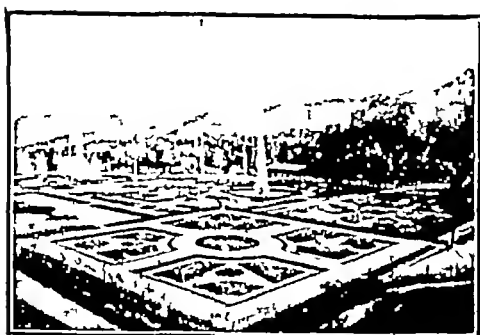
Every evening a full band was playing in the Public Garden when fountains were at play, and small music parties were to be seen in groups at little distances, with hand harmoniums and Indian tablas.¹ There were Italians, Germans, Russians, French and English men and women, not to mention other nations, such as the Turks, Indians, Persians, and various hill tribesmen. All this great mass of mixed humanity, collected there under beautiful surroundings, attractively decorated with flags, festoons, buntings and electric lights, made the evenings most pleasant. The exquisite fountains at play, the band sending forth Indian tunes, as the Afghans have no music of their own, the beautiful flower beds and lawns, the singing of various musicians in different parts of the extensive garden, the leisurely saunterings of the young and old in their gala dresses, helped to transform Paghman into a Fairyland; and I could hardly believe my eyes when I saw Afghanistan so beautifully arrayed after the sights I had seen all the way from Peshawar to Kabul.

One evening there was a special large gathering, as there was going to be Atten dance, or the dance peculiar to the Afghan soldiers. There was a large number of Afghan soldiers standing in a circle

1 Two drum like instruments on which timing is given to the music.



Note the orthodox Afghans in their national dress as well as the refined Afghans in European dress watching a physical culture performance at Paghman



This beautiful public garden at Paghman looks very charming during the observance of Independence Day, when crowds of people of all shades and grades gather there together

in their uniform, and with the tune of the music they started going round, and round, beating their steps to the time of music and clapping at intervals with the twist of the head which looked very attractive, though in the long run it became a bit monotonous. The dance being over, people began moving round the huge garden, looking very charming with the fountains of different designs shooting up an enormous quantity of water, and we sat in a cafe nearby for refreshments, from where we overlooked the whole garden. A few minutes later lo, the Aala Hazrat (His Majesty is thus termed in Afghanistan) alights from his 'beautiful Rolls Royce and saunters leisurely through the park. Immediately the aristocracy gathers round him, and the Aala Hazrat smiles and shakes hands with whomsoever he happens to be near by. He gently talks with them and behaves as if he is one of them. But who comes from yonder in English dress, a rather beautiful and dainty looking lady with white kid gloves in her hands and beautiful white fur round her delicate neck? While other ladies, European and Afghan, make a low bow to the King, this beautiful creature steals a quiet march from behind the spot where His Majesty is busy receiving salutations and courtesies, and walks with a smile most fascinating and a gait that showed she was no ordinary person. Here she is, face to face with His Majesty, there is an exchange of sweet smiles and the beautiful little arm is gripped affectionately by the King. It is Queen Soumya, the beautiful Syrian Queen for whom Amanullah Khan has sacrificed even his own country and Kingdom. Close by are to

be seen three Afghan children dressed in European style with a French and a German maid whom Queen Souriya greets affectionately, for they are her own. And so the King with his Queen and children, moves round the great gathering in a very simple and unassuming way, willingly extending his arm for a handshake to whosoever longs to clasp it. And then even a greater surprise. Both their Majesties come up to the cafe unattended by any of their staff, and walk up to the nearest table, unmindful as to who occupies it or who are nearest to it, and sitting there, order out their own coffee. Here goes a merry laugh from the Queen and another from the King and yet another, till late in the evening, when they return to their Palace, having enjoyed their coffee and the company of their friends. The Private Secretary to the King, Zia Humayun, a Persian, who knows more than seven languages, and the Military Attache to the King, a grandier looking Afghan, are loitering round the Park but never with their Majesties, as apparently the King and the Queen never want to show their pomp and dignity. Thus every evening their Majesties came and mingled with their own people and added to the charm of Paghman.

One afternoon we were at lunch in our Hotel Bahar, when suddenly I saw His Majesty at the door of our dining-room. A little lad of about ten evidently well brought up, at once got up and bowed to him as a mark of respect. The King wishing not to attract any attention of those present, signalled to him to sit down, but it was too late and by that time the whole



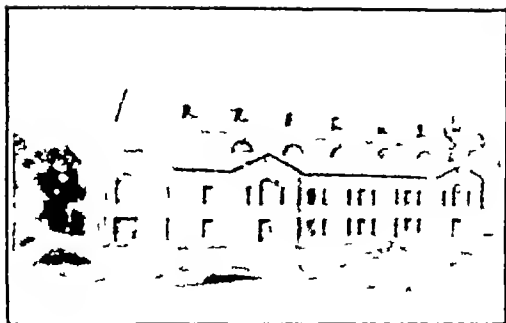
King Amanullah and Queen Surlyah in English Court Dress
Note the Royal Autographs. The whole of the writing
on the left is Amanullah's signature. The plain
and dainty little signature on the right is of
Queen Surlyah.

of the dining room was aware of His Majesty's presence and every one stood up. His Majesty looked shy and stealthily made his way to the nearest table and sat down to lunch with some friends. Here was the success of the King whom his people adored for his simplicity and democratic disposition and where he acted himself as a King of the people.

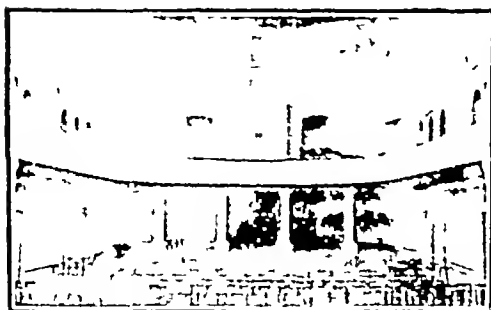
Among these eight days of enjoyment and feasting one evening was specially allotted to gathering the whole population of Paghman to witness the ceremony of laying wreaths near the Triumphal Arch in honour of those brave Afghan soldiers who had fallen in the service of their country during the Third Afghan War. It was an impressive sight with the soldiers and the Afghan Officers all lined in rows and a large mass of people standing quietly. There were the orphans of those brave soldiers dressed in pure white, looking like innocent little lambs whom people welcomed by clapping and shouting. They were made to stand where the wreaths were placed and in fact wherever they went they were given preference and were looked upon with respect. His Majesty had undertaken to feed, educate and clothe them at the expense of the Government. After the ceremony was over, and this was very short indeed, no speeches being made of any kind, these orphans were given motor rides in specially decorated motor cars, which went round the centre of the show and thus added to the beauty of it all.

The King had spared no expense in making people's holidays as enjoyable as possible and an Indian woman singer was specially invited from Lahore for the occasion. She had more of looks than voice and though the fees kept were high she used to have full houses every night. But what pleased me most was the utter silence that prevailed in the audience, and both men and women alike heard the music with wrapt attention and utter silence, even though most of the Indian wordings were not understood by them. This reminded me of our Indian audience and I really began to marvel that those whom we ordinarily called wild were far superior in manners and behaviour to those who only prided themselves as being refined with the civilisation of centuries at their back.

A similar instance of the Afghan behaviour I had chance of observing on the occasion of Fire-Works that were arranged at Paghman during these holidays. The arrangement was made at the Race Course where thousands had collected to watch the wonderful Fire-Works which were certainly far superior to what I have so far seen in India. We were sitting at the topmost rung of the rows of stone steps and nearest to us was Anayatullah Khan or Agha Lala as he was called by the Afghans. (Agha Lala means elder brother and he is the eldest brother of the King). He was talking to us in a most friendly way when His Majesty asked him as to who we were. We were naturally introduced to both Their Majesties who began asking us who we were and how we liked their country and so forth. When the show



Cinema and Theatre at Paghman. The Building is used both for Cinema and Theatre performances. Also for holding Jura meetings or the meetings of the Assembly



Inside view of the Theatre at Paghman

was over, naturally there was a great rush of people. There was a bevy of pretty Afghan girls who wanted to cut their way through. Immediately two soldiers came crying "room for ladies room for ladies," and lo, the crowd stood aside to make room for them. This was beyond my expectation, I must confess, as I never had dreamt to find Afghans so polished and refined as to listen to a mere soldier and make room ungrudgingly for their women.

In the carnival things were arranged much on the same style as we see at carnivals in India and there was nothing very extraordinary except a Brobdingnagian, who was about nine feet in height. He was a man from Kandahar and was moving on his crutches. He was a veritable giant with the body well-proportioned and on enquiry I learnt that once he had a fall from a camel which broke his spinal cord, hence he was bent and had to move on crutches, even then he looked so huge and big with a rather large tongue in proportion to his mouth, which he used to roll peculiarly while talking, that he almost frightened children and ladies. He at once reminded me of the *Pahlavans* or the warrior heroes of which *Shah Namah*, the great Persian epic, is full and I could quite understand that when in this age, Afghanistan, which was once a Persian territory, could produce a giant of nine feet, surely in those far off days the Persian warriors must have been of enormous size and strength. The real cause of merriment at the carnival was the presence of two Lilliputians hardly about three feet to three and a half walking on

either side of the giant. They were from Turkestan and had the looks of Mongolians.

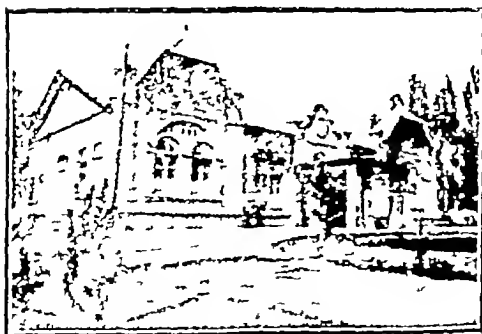
The exhibition especially held at Paghman had a fine collection of all the articles manufactured in Afghanistan and it was really worth a visit. The produce of silk was exhibited in various phases and a man was explaining the details to the visitors, who were in larger number than the building could accommodate, but with all that the local industries such as, those of boots and shoes, leather, cloth, soft and warm hats, silk, various kinds of bangles, armlets, necklaces, all kinds of peculiar Afghan swords, rifles, walking sticks, soaps, attars or scents, carpets and numerous other local made articles were very well represented and was of immense interest to an outsider.

The King had made two tennis-courts in the garden at Paghman where his brother, Sardar Anayatullah Khan was taking keen interest in tennis and was almost daily playing there with his friends and we too were often invited to play with him. The King himself at times played tennis as also the Queen, but during the time I was there, though they were often on the tennis-court, I never had the pleasure of seeing them play. Most probably they were busy with other functions and could not spare time for tennis.

One thing which particularly attracted my attention while at Paghman, was the arrangement of beautiful fruits at the stalls all covered over with



Exterior view of the back of the Royal Palace at Paghman Note
the beautiful stream of water running night and day



Hospital at Paghman, where those Afghans who care to go, are
treated free

white nets to prevent flies from disturbing the fruits. This gave a very neat appearance to the stalls and I am wondering why the various Municipalities in India cannot enforce this practice in the bazaars which will prevent a lot of diseases originating from flies remaining on fruits and food. I had a most happy time for more than eight days in Paghman and I shall never forget the beauty of the scenery, the climate and the charms of the Afghans who had gathered there together for the holidays.

CHAPTER VII

A TRIP TO BAMIAN

Once while chatting at the little café in the beautiful gardens of Paghman with Sardar Anayatullah Khan. he began describing to us the beauties of Bamian, where he said were to be seen colossal statues carved out of the rocks, of Lord Buddha. So fascinating was the description given by this handsome and loveable Prince that we decided to pay a visit to this historic place. more so, when we were told that his young son together with a party of about twenty young men of Royal Family were all proceeding thither. We therefore made preparations and our Afghan friend said all being well we should leave the hotel at 5 o'clock in the morning, *Inshallah*! But the Sardar did not turn up till 8 o'clock and as such we never actually left Kabul till 9 a.m. We took a nice cup of Tea in the Indian Restaurant previously described and with sufficient food for the day and our car being fully loaded with men and luggage. we began rushing across the wild country. After about a couple of hours' run we came to a place called Chare-Kar where our friend had his friend as Chief Magistrate and Governor of the place. We were led to him through narrow zig-zag lanes till we came to an open yard where a handsome looking gentleman was to be seen seated in front of a writing table dressed in European style. Round him were some soldiers fully armed with loaded rifles and squatting in front of him were a few Afghans who had evidently come to him for justice. Beneath

the table was sitting a clerk of the Magistrate who had heaps of loose papers, all written in Persian, lying about him and on the Magistrate asking for a particular one he used to dig deep into them and fumbled about for quite a long time before he came across the right paper. Our friend's friend was a gentleman as polite and polished as could be found in any civilized country and he at once got up and received us and closed the court for a time as he wanted to take us round the little bazaar and show us all the kindness he possibly could. We abruptly left the court yard and went round the bazaar with two soldiers in front and two behind the party of us four. We loitered round the bazaar for half an hour and took leave of our friend who very kindly had ordered a few big and luscious water-melons to be placed in our car for our use *en route*. We then motored on as we had to go some eighty miles North-west of Kabul in the valley of the Hazara country, towards Turkestan. The chief road leads from Kabul towards Turkestan and immediately at the northern foot of that prolongation of the Indian Caucasus now called Koh-i-baba. It was very rugged and a meandering river ran all along the road. Mile after mile on our way we passed through various villages each inhabited by different tribes.

The further we went the fairer and more flat-faced were the tribes till we came across the Hazara tribes whose women were ruddy and handsome. I noticed all throughout my tour in Afghanistan that in the villages and on the fields women

moved with open faces without any veils or purdah. Only a few shy women turned their faces away or raised their upper garments up to their noses just to avoid the curious gaze of foreign travellers. Every village had pariah dogs who for miles ran after our motor car and very nearly upset it, by running in between the wheels. Very probably the motor nuisance was too much for them and they wanted to prevent the traffic disturbing their peaceful siesta. At intervals we used to pass lovely green fields with men and women working at their ploughs or reaping wheat which is their only staple food for making Naan. Naan and fruits seem to be the only staple diet of the Afghans as there is scarcely anything else there to be had for the little money that these villagers could boast of. I was very much struck by the contentment of the people in Afghanistan very few of whom however seem to be begging or in rags as we commonly find beggars in India.

It was nearly 11 o'clock at night when we reached Bamian and the road looked dark and frightful. We were constantly fearing the onslaught of some robbers or murderers in such a quiet and God-forsaken part of the country. However, there appeared a tower with a little fort round it owned by an Officer of the State. We asked permission to stay in, which was given by the servants willingly, the officer himself being away from home. But we could command no food or water of any description at so late an hour and the very suggestion brought a frown on the face of the man, so that we had to



One of Buddha's colossal statues at Bamian Note the scraping off of the upper portion of the face by some religious fanatic



The author with some of his Indian and Afghan friends, inside one of the numerous caves at Bamian burnt down to efface Buddhist paintings

On two sides of these idols are stone staircases leading to a chamber near the head, which shows traces of elaborate ornamentation in azure and gilding. These two are burnt by a peculiar substance which has turned all the caves inside the rock pitch black as if a layer of coal tar had been poured on them. Here and there isolated paintings of Buddha in meditation or his mother or father are to be seen in beautiful azure and gilding from which one could imagine what the whole thing must have looked like in those far off days when all these small caves were peopled by the Buddhist monks. It is not known which fanatic ruler is responsible for the irreparable damage or loss to the ancient art. Probably, it can be attributed to Jengiz Khan who had long besieged Bamian and finally destroyed the fort. For full historical information, the readers may consult the "Rock Caves and Statues of Bamian" by Hon'ble M. G. Talbot.

What was my surprise when I came out on the terrace early in the morning to have a shave, and trying to look for a nail on the wooden structure of the door to hang my mirror on, I read the name of my esteemed friend, G. K. Nariman, written in pencil with the date of his visit to that place. Evidently he had stayed in the very room where we had slept the night over.

In the opposite direction of the rock caves and statues of Bamian was a ruined castle probably five centuries old which is believed by some of the Afghans to be the Castle of Zohak, the legendary usurper King of Persia described in the third chapter.

We made a stop of two days at Bamian during which we lived on beautiful fruits and home-made curd and pillan cooked in purely Afghan style. Throughout, the climate was so agreeably cool and invigorating, that we looked quite rosy during the short stay we had at that historic place

While returning to Kabul we came across a huge stone evidently forming part of a rock once and lying on the side of a turning inscribed in Bhrahmini character. I took a photograph of it with great care with a view to getting it transcribed by some scholar knowing the language to enable me to know what it meant

Unfortunately, while returning to India my friend Mr. Mullick dropped one of his bags from his car which has never since been traced, so that all my photographs along with the bag have been lost

I will never forget the disappointment at having lost some very rare photographs of the country where I do not know whether I will have the good fortune of going again

All I could do was to draw the attention of our Afghan friends to get the block of stone removed to the Kabul Museum, as that was the only one of its kind we saw in the whole of Afghanistan, as a relic of Buddhistic influence in that country.

CHAPTER VIII

GHAZNI

THE LAND OF MAHMUD, THE IDOL BREAKER

We decided to see this famous city in Indian History, my friend and I. So much is said of the Great Mahmud and his frequent conquests of Somnath, the Temple of the Hindus in Kathiawar, that we thought it would be ill-advised to miss an opportunity to see his once famous Capital city wherein he had collected untold treasures, plundered from India. Accordingly, we began making enquiries from the Motor Transport Company as to the best method of reaching Ghazni, but to our disappointment we found they were not running their busses on that side. We therefore wended our way to a Serai and found it busy with motor busses, and a lot of Afghans with their bag and baggage, all chattering and shouting their throats hoarse, and evidently bargaining with the scoundrels of the motor drivers. After making due enquiries from the excited lot there, we found that there were no fixed busses nor any fixed time for them to carry us to that Ancient City. We therefore bargained with one wily Afghan Agent and it was agreed that we should go to the Serai the next day at noon. About eleven in the morning next day, we leisurely sauntered through the bazaar and came to the Serai thinking we were too early and found much to our chagrin that the buss for Ghazni had already left, and there was none other to go that way on that day. Early next day we again went to the Serai and caught hold of

the Motor Agent who gave a significant smile and said, "Inshallah, you will go to Ghazni to-day as soon as the busses come back from where the Police have taken them, as there was a raid somewhere, and all the busses were captured by them." We left our address saying we were staying very near the Serai and would keep ourselves ready if the buss would come and give us a lift. A solemn promise with a loud Inshallah was given and we were waiting all day with our bedding and everything ready in the hotel but the buss never came. Evidently it had already left prior to our calling at the Serai. It might be mentioned that there is no fix time for these busses to leave nor is there any responsibility attached to any one. These are privately owned busses by unscrupulous motor drivers who know nothing better than saying Inshallah and securing money in advance from passengers and leaving the rest to Allah. However we were determined to go to Ghazni and so on the third day we went early in the morning to the Serai with our bag and baggage and got in one of the busses which was supposed to go to Ghazni, but it was quite noon before the buss moved on as the owner had to wait till he found all the seats taken up, otherwise it would not be worth his while to use so much petrol over two passengers.

It was an extremely dusty journey extending over ninety miles and the road, though not bumpy to the extent I expected it to be, was nevertheless uninteresting. The passengers with us were a poor set of Afghans and on the whole rather quiet, so that

to pass the time my friend Mr Darabshah Shroff who knew Persian well, began amusing the passengers with his anecdotes and his knowledge of the Ancient Persian Kings. When he started talking of Firdausi they pricked up their ears and felt greatly interested to learn who he was and what he had done. Naturally, though speaking Persian and not of the first order, these way-fairers were an illiterate lot and were not supposed to know of the immortal Homer of the East. It might be of general interest to the reader to learn who Firdausi was and what connection he had with our undertaking such a dusty and uninteresting hard journey of ninety miles off Kabul.

A Turk slave by name Subaktagin, once went out shooting and caught hold of a kid whose mother to save her life ran away into the jungles as fast as her four legs could carry her. But every few seconds she began casting a backward glance and bleating as much as to say to Subaktagin that it was shameful on his part to thus make her so unhappy by separating her from her heart's delight. Subaktagin felt pity for her and let off the kid which joined her mother in no time. The same night, it is said, Subaktagin heard a voice in a dream telling him that as he had done an act of grace that day, he would one day become a king. And so he did, and established his kingdom in 977 A. D. He was followed by his son Mahmud of the historic fame who was very fond of hearing tales of the Ancient Persian heroes written in a book called Bastan Namah. Being very fond of Persian Poetry, he

entrusted the work of translating the book in Persian verses to Firdausi, the greatest genius among the poets in Persia. This Light of the Court, as his title given him by Mahmud suggests, though his real name was Abul Kassim Tusi, laboured hard for thirty years during which he composed some sixty thousand Persian couplets. When the work was entrusted to this gifted poet, the King had offered him one Mohor (Guinea) for every couplet, so that for thirty years' labour this gifted but poor poet ought to have got sixty thousand pounds sterling. But Mahmud was avaricious and Firdausi had made an enemy in the Chancellor of the Exchequer, so that one day when the King was in an ill mood, he was told that the Treasury was nearly empty and it would be folly to waste sixty thousand Guineas (Mohors) on Firdausi's couplets. The King took the Royal Treasurer by his word and ordered that Firdausi be sent sixty thousand silver coins instead, in other words, less than sixty thousand shillings. The poet was at a public bath, some miles away from where the King was, when an orderly presented him with three bags, each of twenty thousand silver coins, and the King's letter, informing him of the change of his mind. This enraged the old poet, who was then nearing seventy, so much, that he presented one bag to the man who brought the message and one to the keeper of the bath and one to an old lady nearby and tearing off the letter asked the orderly to convey to the King that he had not wasted his thirty precious years over this miserly reward. It would be long to narrate subsequent developments as to how Firdausi

satirized the great Mahmud by writing a quartette in a Mosque, ironically telling the King that had he been born of a lady and of a king he would have showered pearls and diamonds on him instead of proving himself a miser, how the king ordered him to be trampled underneath the feet of an elephant, how Firdausi saved himself from this miserable death by fleeing to the Court of his new patron, how eventually he roamed about from place to place, and died in a public street, on hearing a little boy repeat his self-same quartette which had driven the king to such a great rage. And then the history ends with even a greater tragedy than depicted above. It so happens, that late one evening the King returns from a hard day's work and is much worried and wishes one of his personal attendants to read Firdausi's great work *Shah Namah* as it is called. Some very sweet and philosophical verses are recited which gladdens the heart of the king, who suddenly recollects what grave injustice he has done to that genius whom he himself called the Light of the Court, and at once orders that sixty thousand gold mohors be sent to him forthwith. A courtier runs as fast as his horse can carry him and comes to the town where Firdausi was last supposed to be staying. As he enters the gate he sees a funeral procession. He enquires who was thus being carried to his grave and staggers to find it is none else than Firdausi for whom he has come. The king's atonement is too late and thus ends the life of the greatest Persian Epic Poet, who has left an immortal name for himself, and an invaluable treasure in the Persian literature.

It was partly with a view to do homage to this once mighty king Mahmud, who, directly or indirectly immortalised the Ancient Persian Kings through Firdausi's great work, and partly with a view to see this ancient historic capital city, that we started for Ghazni.

Once did we stop at a dilapidated village for refreshments, but there was hardly anything to be had except huge water-mellons, and the dust had accumulated so much all about us and over our luggage, that I was afraid even to open the tiffin basket and contented myself by sharing a water-mellon with my friend

Along with us there was an Afghan with a huge long Naan round his waist belt, which he from time to time used to break and eat and looked so content over it the whole day

Late in the evening we arrived at Ghazni so full of dust that we looked as if we had risen from our graves. There was not a sign of any broken down castle or palace or even a park or a garden, and I was greatly disheartened to find Ghazni, the once mighty city of an equally mighty king, so barren and void of any life around. And it was only nine hundred years ago that he was one of the mightiest Kings of the East, with his capital in that city. The buss stopped at a Serai, as miserable looking as the city itself, and it was fortunate that we had a friend from a noble Afghan family, so that we decided to go to his place for the night.

There was an old Fort on a hill, rather unique, in which the whole of the population of Ghazni had their quarters. Our friend was no exception and we therefore wended our way through the gate of the fort. To my surprise I found there was only one entrance to the fort, and as it was evening time, along with the farmers and other men and women labourers, their cattle too were driven in through the same gate. Inside the gate was a long narrow lane, on either side of which were shops of grain, mutton and munition dealers, goldsmiths, ironmongers, etc., etc. The lane was so narrow that hardly three men could walk abreast and the reader can then imagine how difficult it must be for the cattle and the farmers late in the evening, to go through it. All the houses inside were very quaint in their structure, mostly thatched, with very low doors and windows. It was a perfect maze, and but for our friend and his servants we would have been lost in that fort. An old maid greeted us and told us that the Agha (the lord of the house) had gone shooting but would be back presently. We loitered about the fort for over half an hour and found the place most uninteresting and I was most disappointed in not finding the slightest vestige of the existence of the once famous city. All that could be seen was miles and miles of flat plains with a patch of green here and there and with some sign of a ruined building.

Our friend came, a well-built, brown-eyed, fair and rather handsome Afghan, with polished manners, and apologized for having kept us waiting so long.

He led us into his small building which was the only one of its kind in the whole of Ghazni which had small doors and windows with glasses. Others were of a different design and not so good.

He at once ordered tea, late though it was, which was served in unique Afghan fashion, not unlike Persian. A beautifully embroidered cloth was spread on which cups and saucers were laid. The tea was served by the host himself, usually no milk is taken with tea. Green tea is used all throughout Afghanistan and as it is rather weak without milk it hardly suits the taste of those who are used to drinking good Indian tea with milk and sugar.

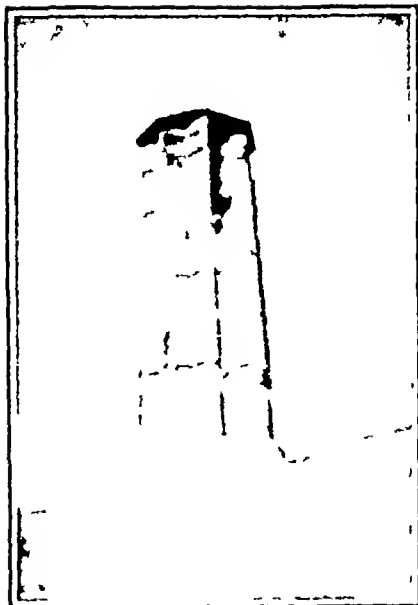
After some time was spent in pleasant chat our charming host ordered out dinner which was served on the same style as the tea. Two huge dishes of rice mixed with meat were placed in the middle, as also some delicious fruits, and one had to help himself from these according to his requirement. Of course fingers were used in eating the food.

It was the fourth of September, and yet the height of Ghazni being nearly 7,280 feet I found it very cold and had to put on my overcoat to keep myself comfortable. Our host was a good musician and, as stated before, Indian music is mostly prevalent in Afghanistan, so that he entertained us to some good music on harmonium, and rubab (a stringed Afghan instrument like a mandoline) as well as on a Deccaphone which he had obtained from Bombay.

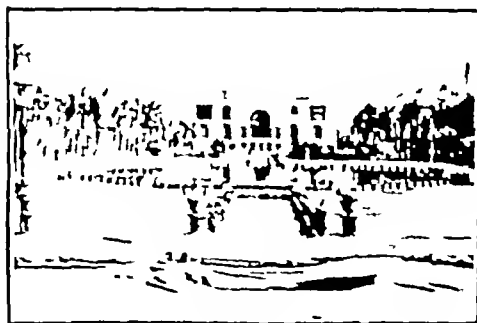
The next morning we were supposed to be returning to Kabul and so we got up very early to go to Mahmud's grave. Our friend being rather fond of shooting took a man with him to carry his gun for him and only a few yards from the fort we came across two beautiful minarets each 140 ft. high and about 400 yards apart, which are the only remnants to remind one of the once famous Mahmud of that place. The inscriptions on the top of the minarets are in Kufic, the language which was in use prior to the Arabic language, and they are built somewhat on the style of Kutub Minar, though not as beautiful as the latter. It is said that the first minaret was built by Mahmud himself to commemorate his victory of Somnath and the other one was completed by his son after his death.

We walked on after having taken photographs of these beautiful minarets, as will be seen from the picture on the opposite page, and met with some Afghan farmers carrying grapes on donkeys all the way to Kabul, in exchange for which they brought back from that city wheat for their family.

At a distance of a mile and a half, we came to the village of Rouzah, where lies the tomb of the once mighty monarch who had invaded India no less than seventeen times, and brought untold treasures to his country. The outside appearance is very unprepossessing, unlike the beautiful Mogul structures at Delhi and Agra. The walls are thatched with mud and straw, and it almost appears an irony of fate that such a mighty monarch is laid in such a dilapidated place.



Minaret at Ghazni erected by Mahmud to commemorate the great
victory at Somnath. The writing on it is in
Kufic characters



The view of the court of Justice at Kandahar not very far from
the British Consulate

with such a poor structure over his grave. Inside the little hall is the marble grave of Mahmud with Kufic characters, invoking blessings on the soul of the dead king. There are on the walls, inscriptions describing the times of Mahmud's reign and his death, etc. It is said that this tomb was found in such a dilapidated condition that had not the late King Habibullah Khan taken special interest in it and kept up the structure by occasional repairs, there would hardly have been left any trace of the grave of the world-known conqueror of India. Many Afghan ladies daily visit the tomb, where they go in expectation of realising their most cherished desires in life, taking it to be the tomb of a saint. It is said, that the dust collected from near Mahmud's grave is sold in Kashmir and other places to deluded folks.

The heroes of all nations carry extraordinary tradition with them and Mahmud is no exception to the rule. Sirdar Ikbal Ali Shah in his "Afghanistan of the Afghans" writes, "...in Ghaznee they say that Mahmud on his seventeenth invasion of India plundered and ransacked the temple of the rich Somnathi. There stood an idol in the centre of the *munder* (temple) of gigantic height. This was made of gold and was hollow and the worshippers used to drop their presents of jewels in its mouth. Mahmud struck the idol with a hammer by his own hand, and when his officers beseeched him to spare the idol and accept money from its worshippers, he replied that on the Day of Judgment he would like to be called 'Mahmud the Idol Breaker,' and not 'Mahmud the Idol Seller.'

"Cartloads of rubies and diamonds, gold and silver fell out like a torrent of water from the idol's interior when Mahmud struck the idol. The wealth was brought to Ghaznee, and a portion of it was ordered to be placed at the Jumma Mosque at Ghaznee, while two other pieces were sent to Mecca and Medina in Arabia, to be used as steps of the Mosques. The Hindus, it is said, came to Ghaznee and sent a petition to Mahmud to say that the jewels of their idol might be retained by the king, but the idol should be exchanged for money.

"Mahmud, they say, ordered the idol to be reduced to powder, and that powder, mixed with flour, made the bread for the Hindus at night. The next morning Mahmud said in reply that he had no idol left, for they had eaten their object of devotion in their bread the preceding night.

The worshippers of the Somnath were grieved at heart to know what had been done to them, and in agony and despair they returned to India.¹

We hurried back to the fort and on the way saw the tomb of Mahmud's father Subaktagin, some two miles from the fort. This was lost sight of for years till Abdur Rahman located it and made a simple structure on it. Both these tombs, so simple and almost dilapidated and forgotten by the world, reminded me of how avaricious Mahmud was and how he on his death bed ordered out the whole of the

¹ *Afghanistan of the Afghans*, p. 148



The exterior of the great Mahmud of Ghazni's tomb at the village of Rouzn, some four miles from Ghazni



Here lies the famous Idol Breaker and the plunderer of the treasures of Somnath temple

treasure he had accumulated by constant fighting and bloodshed, to be brought near him, and how he then wept like a child saying he wasted so much of his energy in useless fighting and accumulating of wealth even at the cost of so much blood and after all there he was unable to carry a single coin with him to the world beyond. Such is indeed life and I was greatly struck by the contrast of Ghazni as we read of it in history and as I actually saw it with its two famous kings lying almost forgotten and leaving not a trace behind of their great pomp and power.

We ran for our buss but it was gone. Why? How? We could not say. Perhaps our kind host was too anxious that we should enjoy his hospitality a day longer and he had pre-arranged it. Perhaps the wily chauffeur did not care to wait for us when his buss was full. At any rate we were there perforce a second day. There was nothing to do the whole day but to eat lovely fruits and pilao and keep on looking long distances through the field-glasses from the top of our host's house. In the evening we went round the bazaar and were interested in watching the *poshtins*¹ that were made from the goats' hair. These are well-made and are fairly cheap but the Afghans, not knowing the scientific method of curing the skins, they stink very much and one hardly feels like putting them on. There were bullets and cartridges as well as guns and swords made in the bazaar and were sold freely to any one. The question of license never occurred to the Afghans and as they

1 *Poshtins* = Long coats and overcoats made from sheep's skins

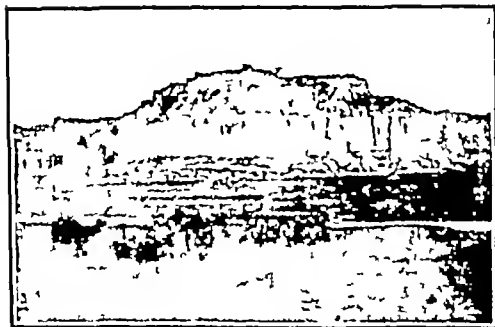
are a brave race they think by right they ought to own arms. Afterwards I learnt that Amanullah Khan was trying to make it compulsory for people to have license before they could keep arms. But this was evidently too late. There were lamps manufactured in a crude way though the top portions were imported from Germany. Among other local industries I saw soap and cloth being manufactured.

There are some beautifully painted walking sticks to be purchased in the Ghazni bazaar and I have brought two with me. But the peculiarity about these is that they are much too long and not comfortable in walking as we usually find ordinary sticks.

The next day we got our buss waiting for us at the Serai and we were thankful to leave the place at about 9 a.m. The journey back was marred by stoppages due to the petrol trouble but we had an optimist of a driver who had nothing to say but INSHALLAH to all our questions and even though he knew he would not reach Kabul till late in the evening, whenever asked if we would be there by the afternoon, he would coolly say, "INSHALLAH, you will." We were at a distance of some thirty miles from Kabul and I knew it would not be possible within an hour to reach there and yet when I asked my optimist Afghan how long it would take to reach there, "INSHALLAH," was the prompt reply, "within ten minutes." We never got in there till after two hours due to punctures and engine trouble, you bet.



Inscription in Kufic character on one side of the tomb of
Mahmud of Ghazni



The fort of Ghazni, within which remains the whole population
of that city

CHAPTER IX

KANDAHAR, THE FRUIT GARDEN OF AFGHANISTAN

As stated in the beginning, due to want of time I had to change my intended motor trip to Afghanistan, and instead of entering the country from Kandahar, I entered it by Turkham. However, after having returned to India, I had to make a rush for Kashmir on business, and after finishing my work there, I returned to Quetta for Kandahar. I was surprised when again difficulty was created over my Passport, which stated that I intended going to Afghanistan via Peshawar, and as such I could not enter it again via Kandahar, unless a fresh Passport was made out. However, after much difficulty I managed to get my Passport viséd, and left Quetta on the morning of the 14th October 1928. I reached Chaman the same evening, after having passed the famous tunnel, supposed to be more than three miles long, and having slept the night over in the Dak-Bungalow, I made preparations to leave Kandahar the next morning. There are one or two Indian motor car companies running their motors to and from Kandahar, and I engaged a front seat in one of these. After a short run, I came across a huge plain, miles in length and breadth, from where one could see a fort known as Killeh-Jadid, which was the Afghan Custom House on the way to Kandahar. The British Border on that side is marked by white stone pillars, placed at short distance, beyond which lies the Afghan territory. Just as our motor proceeded between the white stone pillars, we found a very tiny

little tent hardly a foot or two above the ground, where the motor stopped, and two or three Afghans jumped out from underneath the tent and began looking at our passports. They then permitted our proceeding further and the motor dashed on. To my surprise there was no road to Kandahar. It was a wild barren sandy track of land, wherein the chauffeur had to find his way in the best manner he could, and so one could see motors proceeding in all zig zag manner, and sometimes tyres penetrated more than nine inches into the sand. The Customs House of Killeh-Jadid being at a distance of only seven miles, we should have been there in less than fifteen minutes, but there being no road and the sand being deep, our motor fully took an hour to do the distance. Our luggage was examined same as at Kabul, every little article having been taken out of the bag. I had a sample tin of cigarettes, and the Customs man coolly helped himself to nearly half its contents and shoved it into his pocket smilingly, as much as to say "if you grumble I will detain you for hours." One of the passengers with me had brought a new blanket which evidently he had bought at Chamen and not declared in the Customs schedule, as required by the Afghan Customs. This created a lot of howling and bustling about in the Custom House and the man pleaded not guilty, as it was for his personal use. Anyway the rather fat and rosy looking Afghan at the Custom House was in no mood to put up with explanations and very noisily ordered the poor man out, and yelled out to the subordinate to confiscate the blanket. I found our

motor was being detained by the chauffeur more than was necessary, and on enquiring I was told the passenger whose blanket was confiscated had not come and was still busy arguing with the subordinate of the Custom's Collector. After having waited for him full half an hour, we proceeded on to Kandahar and to our great surprise, after the motor had run about five minutes, the passenger came along and behind him came the blanket with some unknown man, which he smilingly took with him and the motor proceeded, as if nothing had happened. Upto this time I have not been able to make out what wonderful trick was played by the fellow passenger to get back his blanket, so emphatically ordered by the Custom Collector to be confiscated.

After another couple of hours' tiresome run we came to a place called Takht-e-Pool and once again we had to bring out our paraphernalia for Custom's crude examination. The journey was most dusty and I was feeling hungry and thirsty and was hoping that in a short time we would come across a way-side inn, from where we might get something to drink, but instead our motor stopped near a place where there was a shallow streamlet and a man sitting nearby, selling water-melons. My tiffin box got so buried in dust that I was almost frightened to open it, so I left it alone and contented myself by partaking of a water-melon which was my only lunch that day. I then proceeded down the stream to fill my water-bottle for a drink and as I proceeded, I saw the seeds and peels of water-melons lying about and a man

performing ablution of a most delicate and filthy nature. It was a shock to me to see that the only source of water supply between the huge track of land from Chaman to Kandahar should be so lightly treated and made poisonous for any other purpose. I dropped my bottle on the spot and returned in disgust, and reached Kandahar late in the evening, without having taken a drop of water; and yet to my surprise other passengers with me and in various other motor cars thought nothing of drinking the water from the same defiled spot, or of washing their faces and hands with it. Proceeding, a few yards away from the main motor road, we saw some armed Afghans with rifles across their body, waving their hands to us as if in salutation, and our young chauffeur on seeing this speeded the motor so much that I was almost wondering if he was suddenly taken ill. Later on he explained that these were the robbers, who since the past week were harassing passengers and robbing them of their property. At last we reached the Custom House at Kandahar and once again went through the tedious task of Custom's examination. As I was entering the main gate of the city called Sheher Darwaza, I was greatly surprised at another Afghan stopping the motor and wanting to re-examine the goods. I strongly protested and explained to him that it was hardly a hundred yards from there that the main Custom officer had seen my luggage apart from three previous examinations *en route*, and he coolly told me I had done him no obligation by so doing. However, on my flatly refusing to show the luggage the matter ended and I entered the gate, and met

my host, Khan Bahadur Sardar Mohd Khan, His Majesty's counsel at Kandahar

It took me fully six hours by motor car from Chaman to reach my destination

As I was entering the walls of the city of Kandahar, I was curious to find out why people ran in batches of fives and tens. On enquiry I found that three dacoits were to be blown through the gun within a few minutes. I ran to the spot, which was crowded by Afghan men, women and children. There were three nasty looking dacoits, who had been captured a few days before by the king's soldiery, for looting and harassing the wayfarers passing to and from Kandahar and Chaman on business. With a view to set an example, and to keep the road perfectly safe for travellers, the special council of people at Kandahar had ordered that these culprits be blown through the guns. It was an experience of my life to have seen this rather revolting spectacle. The culprits were marched through the city, with heavy chains round their body and with a strong escort of soldiers with loaded guns and were eventually brought near the hill, in front of which was installed a solid gun. A blacksmith was asked to break the chain, which was so strong and thick that it took him fully five minutes to break off the fetters. The culprits were then tied in turn to the mouth of the gun, facing the hill. At a sign from the officer, a brand was applied to the gun powder. A loud thunder was followed by a blinding flash of light and a huge column of smoke, and in less than a second the man was high up in the air, coming down

in a rapid twirl and dropping with a thud stark dead. One was cut clean half across the body and the other came rattling down in pieces. Where I stood, a piece of flesh from the dead dropped near my feet, and before I could realise what it was, a little Afghan boy, hardly ten years old, picked up the piece of flesh and began examining it most curiously. No doubt, to people with stern hearts, such a deterrent punishment is necessary to preserve law and order in the country. I was told by a resident of Kandahar, that five years ago when there was a similar occurrence, one arm of the culprit was wrenched off the body with such force, that it struck a spectator on the forehead and killed him on the spot, and the man next to him caught the same arm in his eyes and was permanently blinded. And yet it surprised me to see the people of Kandahar watching this heart-rending spectacle nonchalantly and with a serenity with which we might see a boxing tournament or a football match.

I returned to the Consulate and after a good dinner and congenial talk with my friend, the Khan Bahadur, went to sleep. Next day I went round the bazaar on business.

Kandahar is a square built city, surrounded by a wall of $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles circuit from 20 ft. to 30 ft. high, with an average width of 15 ft. The bazaar is all white washed and looks much cleaner and more open than the bazaar of Kabul. There are few buildings of which Ahmed Shah's tomb with his twelve children plays a prominent part and really looks artistic. The popula-

thing that I am glad of about Kandahar, is the novel experience of seeing the dacoits blown through the guns, and but for it, I should have felt most disappointed that I ever went to see Kandahar which otherwise boasts of nothing.

CHAPTER X

FOLK-LIFE OF AFGHANISTAN

"Even before he enters the world the Afghan creates a stir" writes Sirdai Ikbāl Alī Shah in his "Afghanistan of the Afghans" According to him, "preparations are made for his arrival, because ceremonies have to be performed which will, as is believed, exercise an influence on his future life" The mother-to-be, is confined to her room in the eighth month or even earlier, according to the state of her health, and she is watched over by midwives These midwives are not trained, as is the case in the West. A woman practises because her mother was a midwife, and although her knowledge as a nurse may be limited—too severely limited in not a few cases—she is invariably expert in a sense that the folk-lore understands, and is inclined to encourage, if the truth be confessed

"Relatives begin to arrive a few days before the birth is due When it becomes known that the birth is imminent, others arrive, the men armed with matchlocks When it is announced to those waiting outside the house that the babe is born, the guns are fired, tomtoms are beaten, and the players of musical instruments set up a clamour at once shrill and deafening But everyone strikes the appropriate human note "Happy and prosperous be your days" each says to the other "Happy and prosperous be your days" is the wish expressed on behalf of the new-born babe too The guns and tomtoms scare

away all evil influences, the good wishes are productive of good influences. All hearts are opened in this time of rejoicing and congratulation for a living mother and a living child, and buckets of grain are distributed to the poor. The imagination as well as the heart of the Afghan is touched by the mystery and crisis of birth.

“In connection with the shooting, this is a well-defined custom. If the babe is a girl, seven or five shots are fired, but if a boy, fourteen shots or even more. It matters not about what time of the day or night the birth takes place. The clamour is as loud in the darkness as in the daylight. No one in an Afghan village requires to wait for a morning paper to advertise the hour and place of birth, often in the dead of night people are awakened by the birth demonstration, only, however, to repeat one to another the appropriate good wish “Happy and prosperous be your days ”

“The date and hour of the child's birth is of great consequence. Friday is a lucky birthday. Happy is the babe who sees the light on that day. A child born at early morning is assured of success in life, a child born in a storm is expected to endure ill-health or to have to face other troubles in the days to come.

“When a few months old, the head-shaving ceremony is performed by the family barber. The child is dressed in gaudy clothing, the barber spreads an embroidered handkerchief, wets the hair with

rose-water from a silver cup, and shaves with a new razor. This practice has originated in the belief that the hair of a new-born child is unclean.

"Friends and relatives attend the ceremony. They dine after the barber does his part, and are afterwards entertained to a musical programme. While the instrumentalists are engaged the barber presents the silver cup that held the rose-water, and each guest drops a coin into it. All the coins must be silver, and they all go to the barber's banking account. The shaving is repeated time and again until the child is four or five years old. The first shaving alone, however, is a ceremonial one.

"When a child is cutting its teeth, the event is celebrated by a gathering of relatives. In time, when the milk teeth begin to come out, they are thrown into a mousehole, so that the new teeth may be sharp and strong as those of a mouse.

"The child is kept on milk diet until about three years of age. Then it is put on "grain and hard diet." The occasion is celebrated in ceremonial manner. The family collect in a room, and the parents recite long passages from the Koran. The child's neck is adorned by charms, including luck-stones, luck-wood, and the carved claw of a lion or tiger. In addition to the charms, a sacred pendant is worn, the pendant for a girl is more ornamented than that given to a boy. The sacred pendant may be a coin, or a piece of metal inscribed, or perhaps a jewel attached to gold or silver chains. For a year or two the child

is freed from ceremonials. When, however, a new dress is put on, a visit is paid to the relatives, who drop coins into the pockets.

“A boy's education begins at eight or nine. He may attend a mosque school or a public school, which is partly supported by the Government. The books used are prepared by educationists, chiefly notable Mullas, and the Mullas appoint the teachers. Every village has its school. The more important towns, such as Kabul, Kandahar, Ghaznee and Herat, have large and well-organised educational institutions, the more advanced being somewhat like Western universities. In these a training is given in the more important Oriental languages. Science is not neglected, but religious philosophy bulks largely in the curriculum. Sufis and Mullas have almost complete control of these universities, which are attended by students from many lands. The schools at Badakshan, a town on the borders of Afghanistan and Turkestan, are attended by many students from Bokhara.

“I now come to the betrothal and wedding customs and ceremonies. The contracting parties do not act on their own account. There is no preliminary love-making period, as in the West, but as arranged between parents or guardian, a proceeding not entirely unknown in the West. The young people have no opportunity of making advances or proposals. Purda (seclusion) makes it impossible for the young people to meet. When a boy is advancing in his teens, his parents open negotiations with the parents

of some coy maid who has been discovered by some woman hired to play the part of social spy. This lady, who keeps her engagement secret, visits various houses and reports to the gentleman who has engaged her on the habits and manners of families, on the beauty and behaviour of possible brides, and, last but not least, on the financial position of desirable girls. The pedigrees of a girl's father and mother are scrutinised, and, if the parents are dead all particulars regarding the cause of death and their ages when they passed away. If a beautiful orphan has parents who died of some disease, there is hesitation about contracting a family alliance. The Afghan gives some consideration to eugenics.

“Of great importance is the question of class, and of great importance the question of sect. Men with long pedigrees do not wish their sons to marry the daughters of upstarts. Shuhs will not intermarry with Sunnis, for, although both sects are Islamic, there is a gulf between them as there is between Protestants and Roman Catholics in the Christian world. Shuhs are of Persian extraction, and are called Quzilbashi, or merely Quzilbash. Then Syeds will not give a daughter except to a Syed. Syeds are direct descendants of the Prophet Mahomed. A Moslem girl will not wed a Hindu, although there are Hindus in Kabul. Spiritual leaders, i. e. Peers or Sufis, will not give their daughters to a commoner. The young man must, however, belong to the family of another spiritual leader.

“One week before the marriage the bride seeks the solitude of her chamber surrounded by her companions. She has to undergo a course of beauty treatment. Early each morning she is massaged with a paste made of almonds, aromatic substances, and flour and butter, and then has a bath. This operation is repeated in the evening. Meanwhile she is put on light diet.

“In the meanwhile the poor girl-bride is subjected to very severe beauty treatment. Some elderly ladies massage her face, wash and put oil and perfumes on her hair. The most cruel part of the toilet is the custom of *Tar Zaddani*—removing of the superfluous hairs of the face. This *tar zaddani* is composed of Persian words—*tar* string, *zaddani*, art of beating—and it is effected in a curious manner.

‘A thin silken string is held by one lady, and brought in contact with the skin. a second lady pulls the thread out, and, giving it a spin with her index finger and thumb, lets it go. It strikes the skin. The string motion pulls the hair out, and the position of the string is changed after each stroke. It is a very painful operation, and must be performed on every lady whether she has these hairs or blemishes on her face or not. The face having been washed with warm water, without soap is well powdered.

‘The old ladies in charge dress her and see her repeatedly in her wedding clothes before she is finally passed. Her tresses are perfumed, her face powdered, her eyes are brightened, and, as a finishing

touch, sitaras (stars) are struck here and there over her face. These "stars", or beauty-spots, are small round discs, with a hole in the centre and a slit across. Sitaras are of various colours—golden, silvery, red, blue, purple and green. Crescents of the same kind are also used, and the shine on them produces a remarkable variegated effect. A cap is put on her head and a feather fixed in it.

"The financial strain of the wedding is in large measure placed on the bride's people. They have to erect the Shadī Khana, provide accommodation for the guests, and the number of the guests often reaches as many as a thousand people. The cost of the food is divided between the bridegroom's father and the bride's father.

"The bridesmaids prepare a place in the largest hall of the house for another ceremony, called *aina mushaf* (Persian-*aina*, mirror, *mushaf*, charming and beautiful face, meaning a mirror in which a charming face is reflected). This is, perhaps, the oldest custom in connection with the wedding ceremony. A mirror is placed before the bride, and the bridegroom is asked to sit on the bride's left. A shawl is held over them, and the bride has to unveil and look in the mirror. Then husband and wife see each other's faces for the first time. It is, as a matter of fact, their first real meeting. The bride is shy and does not open her eyes, and the bridesmaids and others pass many humorous remarks, chaffing her freely.

"A silver engraved bowl is then brought, with a little sherbet, and a plate of white rice pudding. The bridegroom is to drink a little of the sherbat and offer the bride a sip. Often she closes her lips tightly, but force is applied and a spoonful dropped into her mouth, so also with the rice pudding. Sherbet and rice must always be tasted first by the man. A shower of roses announces the termination of the custom, and when the bridegroom attempts to rise he finds he is held down to the floor, a corner of his coat having been sewn to the carpet while he was engaged in *aina mushaf*. At this there is a roar of laughter. The offender is found, and is probably a younger sister of the bride. She refuses to undo the stitches unless a gold coin is given to her. As soon as this toll is paid the bridegroom calls his attendants to bring his shoes, but it is found that one of them is missing. Someone declares that she knows who possesses the shoe and that it will be duly returned on payment of two gold coins.

"The bridegroom is rescued from his tormentors after the payments are made."

The following chapter from the same author on the Customs, Religious Rites, Ceremonies of Burials, etc., may be of interest to the readers —

"As soon as it is known that a man is about to die in African phraseology, the physicians have 'declared their reply' (*jawab dadand*) that the patient will not live long—the news spreads like fire, and relations begin to collect.

“If the dying man has not made a will, he calls a qazi and dictates and signs one. The women-folk dislike to hear of a will, the word is never uttered when anybody is unwell. It is equivalent to expressing an ill wish. If they enquire as to how the patient is, they generally say, ‘We have heard that the enemies of your husband are indisposed.’

“A dying man calls his sons, daughters, and wife to his bedside. He makes a short speech to them in which he wishes them good-bye, and advises them to live in peace and harmony as they have done during his lifetime. Then he places his hand on his wife’s head and asks her to be considerate to her children, and appoints his eldest son as the head of the family. All weep most profusely. The dying man warns them—as a rule—that his soul will not rest in peace if they weep after his death or do not live together in harmony and peace.

“When death at length comes, loud wailing resounds through the fort. Relations and servants weep profusely. Someone sits down near the dead person and reads the sura yasin (one of the chapters of the Koran). Other members of the family and clan come to join in the burial procession, and the house is soon quite full.

“No one is allowed to go into the room where the dead person may be lying, a dim light burns there, and two or three hafiz, or chanters of the Koran, by rote read the suras in a low tone, while all without is wailing and crying. Some are wrapped in mournful

silence A man is at once despatched to make the grave ready, another to bring white shrouds and incense and earthenwares In a piece of ground in the family garden is dug a temporary grave, called *lahd*, and there the dead is washed and bathed. Then this grave is closed up and made green with turfs of grass

“Water-carriers and others engage themselves in the act of washing the corpse, and two or three near relations rub the body, while the water-carrier spurts water from his *mashk*—a goat-skin containing water. The big toes of the dead person are tied with a strip of white muslin, and a white sheet is carried right upto the head and knotted there. Benzoin burns all the time, and the *lahd* is curtained all round Then the wooden frame, like a bedstead, is brought forward, a white cloth is spread on it, and the corpse, supported by six people, is transferred from the *lahd* board on to the bedstead Two sheets cover the dead body, and the corners are tied at the ends by white strips, and then the *jenaza* (the funeral) preparations are completed.

“A rose perfume is sprinkled over the *jenaza* no flowers are laid there, but in some families the outer cover of the bedstead is inscribed with verses from the Koran The burial takes place as soon as possible A short prayer, called *fatiha*, is read before lifting the bier, which is then carried on shoulders, the six nearest relatives supporting the bedstead, one at each corner and two in the middle; no one goes in front of the *jenaza*.

"If the dead is a woman, all the ceremonies are the same, but the washing, *ghusl* (Persian, bath) is done by a female of the family—usually the mother or some other elderly person. The bier is then carried from the female quarters to the courtyard, where the funeral service is performed.

"When people hear that So-and-So is dead, they utter these sentences from the Koran: "Inna Lillaha wa inna alaihi rajayun" (Arabic, "We are owned by God, and to Him we must all return.")

"The funeral service is held in the courtyard or a field where large numbers of people may be able to pray. The bier is placed in front and all arranged facing it. The Imam, or priest, leads the prayer. All fold their arms, one over the other, round their waist, direct their gaze downwards at the words of "Allaho Akbar"—"God is Great"—from the Imam, and a silent prayer is read for the peace of the soul.

"When the prayer is over, the bier is carried to the grave, and all the mourners follow in procession, repeating prayers for the dead. The grave, which has been prepared beforehand, consists of a ditch six feet deep, with an underground chamber running to the right side, in which the body is to be placed. This chamber is called *baghli*, or caress.

"It is the custom that if any one meets a funeral procession in his way, whether he knows the person or not, he must accompany it for at least forty steps and repeat the prayer for the dead. If he is in a car-

riage or riding a horse, he must come down and join the mourners, and must not pass the *jenaza*, but wait till the procession passes, before he continues his journey.

“When the bier reaches the grave, two men descend into the grave and the corpse is lowered gently and placed in the chamber. The direction of the grave is determined according to the situation in which lies the Holy City, Mecca. The feet of the dead man must be towards the west, and the head to the east, the face being towards Mecca. When the men come out of the grave, a short prayer is repeated by all who are standing round. Then the boards are placed in position and a mat laid over them and the earth thrown in. All the mourners throw handfuls of earth, and finally the grave is closed and a mound raised over it. A temporary gravestone is erected, and below it a small lamp burns feebly. Men are appointed to watch the grave, and, one or two Mullas having read passages from the Koran, the party wend their way back to their respective homes.

“It may be mentioned here that in some cases the chamber in which the body rests is constructed of bricks and a space two feet high is left below the covering planks. It is believed that when the horn is sounded on the Day of Judgment all the dead will arise. It is desired that when they awake their eyes will gaze at the Holy Kaba at Mecca. The space left above the grave is the height of an average man when he sits erect, as every one will sit when he hears the last summons.

"The chambers of many graves are not lined with bricks, nor are any structures placed over them for some people think that the body will have a hard struggle in leaving the grave at the Blowing of the Horn if the graves are covered with cement and stones.

"After the burial the chief mourners return to the house of the deceased. There the head of the clan addresses the womenfolk, counselling them not to grieve for it was the will of Allah that So-and-So has died and that his soul should be accorded Divine Acceptance. Then the party is asked to dine, and after a prayer they disperse.

"The widow and the female relatives of the deceased wear no colours and no ornaments. Some widows never again use colours, but always appear in pure white, without ornaments.

"Feasts called *Jum'arat* (Persian, of Thursday) are held every Thursday, and mourners are invited to dinner and to read the Koran for the dead. Similar ceremonies are also observed on the fourteenth day and the fortieth day after the death. On the fortieth day, which is called *Chahlum*, friends and relations come from far and near to join in the mourning, and all go to the grave to pray there. The women attend on this occasion. When a relation comes from a distance to join in the *Chahlum*—one who has not been at the burial ceremony—he shakes hands with all and expresses sympathy.

"Chahlum being over, there is no other formal function till a year has gone past. Then the mourning

called *sali* (Persian, pertaining to year, yearly) is held. All relatives go to the grave and spend a whole day there in mourning. The lamp-lighting takes place each Thursday for long afterwards, and a Mulla may be appointed to read the Koran regularly over the grave for a number of years. On Fridays after the prayer, people visit the graveyard and read a portion of the Koran and send blessings to the soul of their relatives.

“On Thursdays after *isha* (last prayer or night prayer) one may see a whole household sitting round the lahd, where the body of the dead has been washed. Chapters from the Koran are read for the benefit of the departed. The scene is one of great solemnity, and is very touching. The mourners read a portion of the Holy Texts, and pause with uplifted beseeching hands. With deep reverence they first send the blessings of the Koran to the soul of the Prophet Mahomed. Then very tenderly, their sorrow sweetened by piety, they send heartfelt blessings to the soul of their own remembered dead. So do love and duty endure, for death cannot cause them to wither and decay.”

The Afghan songs are very varied in form, like *Sard-Bibi Abkhah*. In some of them moral teaching is intermingled with the fighting spirit, that it is difficult to say whether a saying was uttered in a mosque or on a battlefield. But all the same they are pathos, and portray much of the life of the hill. Women form one of the three essential factors and causes, for which an Afghan would fight,

the other two being liberty and money. No one will ever stand a reflection which may be made on any female of his clan, for the female respect is regarded as the nose of the Afghan nation. Yet henpecked husbands are the butts of humorous remarks. A proverb runs :

“A tortoise is no fish, though it swims,
Nor a bat a bird, though it flies.

So a henpecked man is no man, though
he wears male garments.”

“Many other good sayings are plentiful :
The throne for the Ameer, the scales for the merchant,
the plough for the farmer, and the sword for
an Afghan”¹ are really suggestive.

“Some of the Afghan sayings and proverbs
are terse. The vices and virtues are dealt with.
Hypocrisy is well indicated in the phrase .

“Under his arm the Koran and his eye on the
bullock.”

“Like a mad dog he snaps at himself” and
“You cannot clap with one hand alone” illustrate
bad temper.

“Courteousness is beautifully expressed :

“Be it but an onion, let it be given graciously.”

“Decision and resolution are contained in
the advice .

1 Afghanistan of the Afghans pp. 116 117

“Do not take hold of sword-grass, but if you do, grasp it tight.”

“Industry is somewhat equivocally dealt with in the short phrase

“Whoever loves, labours.”

“Some other sayings are proverbial, as .

“Doubt destroys faith as salt does honey.”

“God will remain, friends will not ”

“Parents say “Our boy is growing”, they forget that his life is, in reality, shortening ”

“An Afghan will on certain occasions say :
“Is the Ameer dead that there is no justice ?”

“Though God is Great, yet He sends no rain from a clear sky ”

“Though your enemy be a rope call him a snake ”

“The ungrateful son is a wart on his father’s face. To leave it is a blemish , to cut it a pain.”

“Shoes are tested on the feet, a man on trial.”

“When the knife is over a man’s head, he remembers God ”

“A frog mounted on a clod and said that he had seen Kashmir ”

“If a mouse were as big as a bullock, it will be always the slave of a cat.”

“To say ‘Bismillah’ brings blessing, but not in wicked pursuits’

“Our silver lining to every cloud is reproduced in :

“Though the clouds be black, yet white drops fall from them.”

“Love of riches in old age is denounced in the following :

“O Greybeard, thou eatest earth !”

Afghanistan of the Afghans pp. 119 120.

Ibid p 120.

CHAPTER XII

THE FALLEN IDOL

On a beautiful moonlight night, somewhere in the month of February, I was dining with an Afghan friend in my bungalow, when suddenly the evening's Newspaper announcing in big type some serious troubles in Afghanistan, came to hand. I at once enquired from my friend, who was a high Afghan Official, whether there was any truth in the report. He began laughing at the idea that anything so serious could happen in Afghanistan, when there was Amanullah Khan as an Idol on its throne. He lightly passed the matter, saying these informations generally filter through chauffeurs and other irresponsible men who have no accurate knowledge of any sort, and as such, such reports have no value whatever. However, I little dreamt that the matter would come to such a pass when Amanullah Khan would have to bid for his throne.

When I was in Afghanistan, Amanullah Khan seemed to be so secure on his throne and he appeared so sure of his safety, that he went through the narrowest lanes of his capital any time, unarmed and unguarded, and the remotest part of the country appeared to be as safe for travelling, as Kabul itself. However events did change, and the once mighty monarch is now a fallen Idol. The reasons are not very far to seek. An independent, war-like, biggoted nation, with a staunch faith in religion which debarred all foreign education, manners and customs from

entering into their hearth and home, could not brook interference even from a monarch when he wanted to strike at the very root of their social manners and customs. For instance, how can a man who considers the white races of foreign countries as Kaffirs, (heathen) tolerate the very idea of putting on a Kaffir's dress? How can a nation that so jealously guards its women folk, tolerate the idea of leaving their wives, daughters and sisters, to go unveiled? How can a nation so staunch in its faith, as to be almost biggoted, tolerate the change of its social manners and customs? How can a nation who consider the knowledge of the whole world to have centred in their sacred Koran, tolerate the idea of sending their ladies to Kaffir countries for modern education, the idea of which to them is so revolting? How can a nation entirely under the influence of Syeds and Mullahs (Priests and Ecclesiastics) tolerate the shooting through guns and hanging by ropes of those, whom they consider next to their prophet, and as such rebellion was inevitable and religious intolerance got upper hand, and sided with a mere merauder, called Baccha-e-Saqa. He according to the reports was once a water-carrier's son, and had worked in a tea shop as well as on roads as a stone breaker. And pray who is this merauder King, who changes his name from Baccha-e-Saqa, (water-carrier's son) to Habibullah Ghazi (Habibullah, the defender of religion.) I would rather let my friend Mr N. D. Mallik speak of him in his own language, as it appeared in the Sind Herald of Karachi.



Բաժնի Երգի or Habibullah Ghazl who usurped the throne of
Amrullah and his brother Anrartullah

“ ‘Hush Koo, pesh marau’ shouted a score of Pathans on the road between Istalifi and Sarai Khoja, the latter place being about 22 miles from Kabul towards Kohistan. They spoke in Persian which meant, ‘take care and do not proceed further,’ and which was apparently tantamount to a serious warning.

“ ‘But why ?’ ” I enquired, at the same time telling my chauffeur to stop the car.

“ ‘Salub, a party of outlaws is hiding itself beyond yonder wall of the ruined building. They have set fire to a motor lorry and have killed the driver. Look at the body of the unfortunate man lying across the road,’ ” was the reply.

“ ‘What should we do, Sahibzada Sahib ?’ ” I asked my host who had taken me out to show the Switzerland of Kabul as Istalifi is called. It is a lovely place with three thousand houses on the top of the hill, with beautiful gardens of dainty fruits at its foot and with a copious supply of water from a running stream.

“ ‘We should not take the risk and had better pass the night elsewhere than at Sarai-Khoja (which was our destination),’ ” said my friend.

“ ‘Better tell my chauffeur where to go,’ ” I told my friend.

“ ‘We turned to the left as directed by the Sahibzada. Hardly had we proceeded about 200 yards when I saw a house on fire. On enquiry I was

told that there was a small village nearby and the house in question formed a part of it. "Let us help in putting out the fire," said I.

"Don't you attempt any such thing, Sahib," said one of the Pathans. "The outlaws who have killed the motor driver also did this mischief. They have warned the villagers that any one trying to save the property will have their own property treated in that way," added the man.

"Whose house is that and why has it been set fire to?" I enquired.

"The house belongs to one Abdul Samad. Some days back the outlaws visited the village and demanded a sum of one thousand Kabuli rupees from him as their dues as 'uncrowned Kings of Afghanistan.' The man pleaded poverty. He sought the protection of the Kabul police as he feared he might be done to death. A guard of policemen was deputed to keep watch and ward over his house. The outlaws got the wind and waited for an opportunity to avenge themselves on him. In a few days the guard was withdrawn and Abdul Samad went to Kabul on business. The outlaws came to his house and told his wife to get out of the house as they were going to set fire to it. She begged and appealed for mercy, and even went to the extent of borrowing a sum of one thousand Kabuli rupees from her neighbours to pay their 'dues' but they did not listen to her entreaties. They set fire to the house and made the villagers, whom they

collected, to take an oath on the Koran not to help Abdul Samad's wife in extinguishing the fire," explained my informant

"But who are these outlaws, do you know?" I enquired

"One of them, is Habibullah who is the leader of the gang, and the other is Said Hussan. They have forty to fifty followers. The leader fell out with the Afghan authorities some three years back and has taken to plundering. The gang visits off and on a village here and a village there and collects provisions in the form of atta, ghee, sheep and cash.¹ They had not been arrested up till now as the orders of His Majesty Amanullah Khan are to catch them alive. Besides, they are very sure shots and so the Government officials do not want to risk their lives. Once, it is said, the Hakim of Char-i-kar in whose jurisdiction the present raid was committed, tried to pursue the party. The leader had a few followers with him. They all climbed on the hills like goats while the Hakim was at the foot of the hills just thinking how to follow them up. Habibullah saw him and said "You better go away and do not risk your life, I am a sure shot which I want to prove. I will tear off a small piece of flesh from your right heel without causing any serious injury to your body. 'Be ready' Immediately there was a click of the rifle. The Hakim touched his right heel and found that he had received a scratch from the outlaw's bullet. He quietly withdrew and distributed alms for being saved. So I was told

¹ Atta=Flour, Ghee=Clarified butter

“Have they committed many murders before this?” I asked. “No, this was the first victim who came under the fire of the outlaw’s rifle. They never killed anybody but stripped wayfarers of cash and clothings. The unfortunate motor driver was going to Kabul side with a number of passengers in his lorry. The outlaws, after burning Abdul Samad’s house had come on the public road to stop the traffic as they wanted to gain time to disappear and not to be pursued by the military or the police. Habibullah asked the driver to go back but he did not care. He was given another warning yet he did not heed. Then he was given an ultimatum either to return or to be prepared to lose his life. He still insisted upon proceeding towards Kabul with the result that he was shot dead. The passengers were asked to go back which they did. Then a match was applied to the petrol tank of the motor lorry and the conveyance burnt,” said the man.

“Sahibzada Sahib, we had better send your servant back to Sarai Khoja to tell your women-folk that we all are safe, as otherwise they would be naturally anxious to know what became of us as soon as the news of the murder of a motor driver reaches them, which is bound to spread before long,” said I.

“So the servant of my host left for Sarai Khoja and we all took shelter in a fort belonging to one Abdul Qayum who was a friend of my host. He gave us meals and beddings and made us comfortable for the night. He bolted the gate of his fort from

inside and deputed a couple of sentries to keep watch. I had an Afghan official of importance with me who had accompanied me from Kabul after accepting my host's invitation. We heard the buzzing sound of the bullets flying all night but it was at a considerable distance from the fort which led us to believe that the outlaws' gang was having an encounter with some other men.

"Early next morning we had tea and were thinking of taking leave of our new host after thanking him for the shelter he had given us for the night and for his hospitality, when the servant of the Sahibzada returned from Sarai Khoja

"Why have you come back?" asked my host

"To find out as to how you all fared last night?" said he.

"Did you meet the outlaws and their gang on the way?" asked my host

"Yes, I saw Habibullah and Said Hassan sitting near the broken wall of the dilapidated building, about 100 yards from the place you had turned your motor to the left. You did well not to proceed further otherwise you would have been made a sure target for them. Allah be praised," said the servant

"The next day we returned to Kabul and met a Bania, a well-to-do business man. He told us that he had very recently paid a ransom of five thousand Kabuls for his freedom to the very outlaws. "How did you happen to fall into their trap?" I asked

“‘Sahib, I was one day sitting in my house when one of the outlaws came to see me. He told me that there was a very paying business going a-begging, and that if I would accompany him I might make a fortune. He asked me to take my son, a young boy of ten, and my servant with me, as it was just possible it might take some time to come to terms. Like a greedy man I at once followed him, taking my son and my servant with me. After a short distance the outlaw was followed by four men of his. I even then did not suspect any foul play. ‘What is the good of the Seth’s boy and the servant accompanying us?’ said one of them. If it gets late to settle the business I will bring Sethji back to his place, he added.

“‘Yes, you are right. Sethji, better send away your boy and the servant’, said the outlaw

“‘I complied with his wishes. After walking for about an hour we came to a small village, where we halted to have little rest. The outlaw turned round and told me that he was a thief and that he had kidnapped me to get some money out of me. If I did not arrange for the money I would be shot. I shuddered at the disclosure but what could I do except comply with his demand? I had perforce to agree to the payment of the high ransom exacted from me. So I wrote a note to my Munim (agent) to send me 5000 Kabulis to enable me to strike the bargain. One of the followers of the outlaw took the note to my shop. As my servant and my son had heard the conversation between the outlaw and myself about the “so-called business” the Munim

readily paid the money without suspecting any mischief. The money was brought and I was set at liberty to return to my house. When I came back my Munim wanted to know the nature of the business as well as about the amount spent on it. I made a clean breast of my having been made a fool, but had to thank my stars for being saved even at a very exorbitant cost,' was the story told to us."

And so to save himself and his family from being molested by this robber king, Amanullah Khan, thought it advisable to relinquish his claim to the throne and pass it on to his elder brother Sardar Anayatullah Khan, who was the rightful heir to the throne of Afghanistan, being the eldest son of his father Amir Habibullah Khan. This handsome and loving Prince evidently was no match for Baccha-e-Saga. When I came in contact with Sardar Anayatullah Khan at Kabul, I always thought he made an excellent friend and a keen sportsman, but his young brother Amanullah Khan, was better suited to rule. Anayatullah Khan's reign lasted for three days only and he too had eventually to flee from his capital, and join his younger brother. In spite of his best endeavours to regain power, Amanullah had no great support in his own country, and had therefore eventually to bow down his head to the inevitable and to proceed to Italy, exiled from his people and country. As said before, his grandfather was exiled from his own country in Russia for over ten years, and may we not hope that history may repeat itself in case of his grandson for the benefit of the nation and the country itself? Inshallah, it will!

CHAPTER XIII

AFGHANISTAN'S TREATY WITH THE BRITISH

SIGNED AT KABUL, NOVEMBER 22ND, 1921

(*Ratifications exchanged at Kabul, February 6th, 1922*)

PREAMBLE.—The British Government and the Government of Afghanistan, with a view to the establishment of neighbourly relations between them, have agreed to the Articles written hereunder whereto the undersigned duly authorised to that effect have set their seals.

ARTICLE 1.—The British Government and the Government of Afghanistan mutually certify and respect each with regard to the other all rights of internal and external independence.

ARTICLE 2.—The two High Contracting Parties mutually accept the Indo-Afghan Frontier as accepted by the Afghan Government under Article 5 of the treaty concluded at Rawalpindi on the 8th August, 1919, corresponding to the 11th Ziqada, 1337 Hijra, and also the boundary west of the Khyber laid down by the British Commission in the months of August and September 1919, pursuant to the said Article, and shown on the map attached to this treaty by a black chain line; subject only to the re-alignment set forth in Schedule I annexed, which has been agreed upon in order to include within the boundaries of Afghanistan the place known as Tor-Kham, and the whole bed of the Kabul river between Shilman Khwala Banda and Palosai and which is shown on the said

map by a red chain line. The British Government agrees that the Afghan authorities shall be permitted to draw water in reasonable quantities through a pipe which shall be provided by the British Government from Landi Khana for the use of Afghan subjects at Tor-Kham, and the Government of Afghanistan agrees that British Officers and tribesmen living on the British side of the boundary shall be permitted without let or hindrance to use the aforesaid portion of the Kabul river for purposes of navigation and that all existing rights of irrigation from the aforesaid portion of the river shall be continued to British subjects.

ARTICLE 3 —The British Government agrees that a Minister from His Majesty the Ameer of Afghanistan shall be received at the Royal Court of London like the Envoys of all other Powers, and to permit the establishment of an Afghan Legation in London, and the Government of Afghanistan likewise agrees to receive in Kabul a Minister from His Britannic Majesty the Emperor of India and to permit the establishment of a British Legation at Kabul.

Each party shall have the right of appointing a Military Attache to its Legation.

ARTICLE 4 —The Government of Afghanistan agrees to the establishment of British Consulates at Kandahar and Jallalabad, and the British Government agrees to the establishment of an Afghan Consul-General at the headquarters of the Government of India and three Afghan Consulates at Calcutta, Karachi, and Bombay. In the event of the Afghan

Government desiring at any time to appoint Consular officers in any British territories other than India a separate agreement shall be drawn up to provide for such appointments if they are approved by the British Government.

ARTICLE 5.—The two High Contracting Parties mutually guarantee the personal safety and honourable treatment each of the representatives of the other, whether Minister, Consul-General, or Consuls within their own boundaries, and they agree that the said representatives shall be subject in the discharge of their duties to the provisions set forth in the second schedule annexed to this treaty. The British Government further agrees that the Minister, Consul-General, and Consuls of Afghanistan shall, within the territorial limits within which they are permitted to reside or to exercise their functions, notwithstanding the provisions of the said schedule, receive and enjoy any rights or privileges which are or may hereafter be granted to or enjoyed by the Minister, Consul-General, or Consuls of any other Government in the countries in which the places of residence of the said Minister, Consul-General, and Consuls of Afghanistan are fixed, and the Government of Afghanistan likewise agrees that the Minister and Consuls of Great Britain shall within the territorial limits within which they are permitted to reside or to exercise their functions, notwithstanding the provisions of the said schedule, receive and enjoy any rights or privileges, which are or may hereafter be granted to or enjoyed

by the Minister or Consuls of any other Government in the countries in which the places of residence of the said Minister and Consuls of Great Britain are fixed.

ARTICLE 6.—As it is for the benefit of the British Government and the Government of Afghanistan that the Government of Afghanistan shall be strong and prosperous, the British Government agrees that whatever quantity of material is required for the strength and welfare of Afghanistan, such as all kinds of factory machinery, engines and materials and instruments for telegraph, telephones, etc. which Afghanistan may be able to buy from Britain or the British dominions or from other countries of the world, shall ordinarily be imported without let or hindrance by Afghanistan into its own territories from the ports of the British Isles and British India. Similarly the Government of Afghanistan agrees that every kind of goods, the export of which is not against the internal law of the Government of Afghanistan and which may in the judgment of the Government of Afghanistan be in excess of the internal needs and requirements of Afghanistan and is required by the British Government, can be purchased and exported to India with the permission of the Government of Afghanistan. With regard to arms and munitions, the British Government agrees that as long as it is assumed that the intentions of the Government of Afghanistan are friendly and that there is no immediate danger to India from such importation in Afghanistan, permission shall be given without let or hindrance for such

importation If, however, the Arms Traffic Convention is hereafter ratified by the Great Powers of the world and comes into force, the right of importation of arms and munitions by the Afghan Government shall be subject to the proviso that the Afghan Government shall first have signed the Arms Traffic Convention, and that such importation shall only be made in accordance with the provisions of that Convention Should the Arms Traffic Convention not be ratified or lapse, the Government of Afghanistan, subject to the foregoing assurance, can from time to time import into its own territory, the arms and munitions mentioned above through the ports of the British Isles and British India

ARTICLE 7 —No Customs duties shall be levied at British Indian ports on goods imported under the provisions of Article 6 on behalf of the Government of Afghanistan, for immediate transport to Afghanistan, provided that a certificate signed by such Afghan authority or representative as may from time to time be determined by the two Governments shall be presented at the time of importation to the Chief Customs Officer at the port of import setting forth that the goods in question are the property of the Government of Afghanistan and are being sent under its orders to Afghanistan, and showing the description, number and value of the goods in respect of which exemption is claimed, provided, secondly, that the goods are required for the public services of Afghanistan and not for the purposes of any State monopoly or State trade, and provided, thirdly,

that the goods are, unless of a clearly distinguishable nature, transported through India in sealed packages, which shall not be opened or sub-divided before their export from India.

And also the British Government agrees to the grant in respect of all trade goods imported into India at British ports for re-export to Afghanistan and exported to Afghanistan by routes to be agreed upon between the two Governments of a rebate at the time and place of export of the full amount of Customs duty levied upon such goods, provided that such goods shall be transported through India in sealed packages which shall not be opened or sub-divided before their export from India

And also the British Government declares that it has no present intention of levying Customs duty on goods or livestock of Afghan origin or manufacture, imported by land or by river into India or exported from Afghanistan to other countries of the world through India and the import of which into India is not prohibited by law. In the event, however, of the British Government deciding in the future to levy Customs duties on goods and livestock imported into India by land or by river from neighbouring States, it will, if necessary, levy such duties on imports from Afghanistan, but in that event it agrees that it will not levy higher duties on imports from Afghanistan than those levied on imports from such neighbouring states. Nothing in this article shall prevent the levy on imports from Afghanistan of the

present Khyber tolls and of octroi in any town of India in which octroi is or may be hereafter levied, provided that there shall be no enhancement over the present rate of the Khyber tolls

ARTICLE 8 —The British Government agrees to the establishment of trade agents by the Afghan Government at Peshawar, Quetta, and Parachinar, provided that the personnel and the property of the said agencies shall be subject to the operations of all British laws and orders and to the jurisdiction of British Courts, and that they shall not be recognised by the British authorities as having any official or special privileged position

ARTICLE 9 —The trade goods coming to (imported to) Afghanistan under the provisions of Article 7 from Europe, etc can be opened at the railway terminus at Jemrud, in the Kurram and at Chaman for packing and arranging to suit the capacity of baggage animals without this being the cause of reimposition of Customs duties, and the carrying out of this will be arranged by the trade representatives mentioned in Article 12

ARTICLE 10 —The two High Contracting Parties agree to afford facilities of every description for the exchange of postal matter between their two countries, provided that neither shall be authorised to establish Post Offices within the territory of the other. In order to give effect to this Article, a separate Postal Convention shall be concluded, for the preparation of which such number of special

officers as the Afghan Government may appoint shall meet the officers of the British Government and consult with them.

ARTICLE 11 —The two High Contracting Parties having mutually satisfied themselves each regarding the goodwill of the other, and especially regarding their benevolent intentions towards the tribes residing close to their respective boundaries, hereby undertake each to inform the other in future of any military operations of major importance which may appear necessary for the maintenance of order among the frontier tribes residing within their respective spheres, before the commencement of such operations

ARTICLE 12 —The two High Contracting Parties agree that representatives of the Government of Afghanistan and of the British Government shall be appointed to discuss the conclusion of a Trade Convention, and the convention shall in the first place be regarding the measures (necessary) for carrying out the purposes mentioned in Article 9 of this treaty. Secondly, (They) shall arrange regarding commercial matters not now mentioned in this treaty which may appear desirable for the benefit of the two Governments The trade relations between the two Governments shall continue until the Trade Convention mentioned above comes into force.

ARTICLE 13 —The two High Contracting Parties agree that the first and second schedules

attached to this treaty shall have the same binding force as the Articles contained in this treaty.

ARTICLE 14 —The provisions of this treaty shall come into force from the date of its signature, and shall remain in force for three years from that date. In case neither of the High Contracting Parties should have notified twelve months before the expiration of the said three years the intention to terminate it, it shall remain binding until the expiration of one year from the day on which either of the High Contracting Parties shall have denounced it. This treaty shall come into force after the signatures of the Missions of the two Parties and the two ratified copies of this shall be exchanged in Kabul within 2½ months after the signatures.

(SD) MAHMUD TARZI,

Chief of the Delegation of
the Afghan Government
for the conclusion of the
Treaty.

(SD) HENRY R. C. DOBBS,

Envoy Extraordinary and
Chief of the British
Mission to Kabul.

Tuesday, 30th Aqrab 1300
Kijra Shamsi (corres-
ponding to 22nd Novem-
ber, 1921).

This twenty-second day
of November one thou-
sand nine hundred and
twenty-one

SCHEDULE I

(REFERRED TO IN ARTICLE 2)

In the nulla bed running from Landhi Khana to Paında Khak Post, the Afghan frontier has been

advanced approximately 700 yards, and the Tor Kham Ridge, including Shamsa Kandao and Shamsa Kandao Sar, is comprised in Afghan territory. Further, the Afghan frontier has been advanced between the point where the present boundary joins the Kabul river and Palosai from the centre of the river to the right bank.

SCHEDULE II.

LEGATIONS AND CONSULATES

(a) The Legations, Consulate-General, and Consulates of the two High Contracting Parties shall at no time be used as places of refuge for political or ordinary offenders or as places of assembly for the furtherance of seditious or criminal movements or as magazines of arms.

(b) The Minister of His Britannic Majesty at the Court of Kabul shall, together with his family, Secretaries, Assistants, Attaches, and any of his menial or domestic servants or his couriers who are British subjects, be exempt from the civil jurisdiction of the Afghan Government, provided that he shall furnish from time to time to the Afghan Government a list of persons in respect of whom such exemption is claimed, and, under a like proviso, the Minister of the Ameer to the Royal Court of London to which all the Ambassadors of States are accredited shall, together with his family, Secretaries, Assistants, Attaches, and any of his menial or domestic servants or his couriers who are Afghan subjects, be exempt from the civil jurisdiction of Great Britain. If an offence or crime is

committed by an Afghan subject against the British Minister or the persons above mentioned who are attached to the British Legation, the case shall be tried according to the local law by the Courts of Afghanistan within whose jurisdiction the offence is committed, and the same procedure shall be observed *vice versa* with regard to offences committed in England by British subjects against the Afghan Minister or other persons above mentioned attached to the Afghan Legation.

(c) (i) A Consul-General, Consuls, and members of their staffs and households, who are subjects of the State in which they are employed, shall remain subject in all respects to the jurisdiction, laws, and regulations of such State

(ii) A Consul-General, Consuls, and members of their staffs and households, other than subjects of the State in which they are employed, shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Courts of such State, in respect of any criminal offence committed against the Government or subjects of such State, provided that no Consul-General, Consul, or member of their staff or household shall suffer any punishment other than fine; provided also that both Governments retain always the right to demand recall from their dominions of any Consul-General, Consul, or member of their staff or household

(iii) A Consul-General, Consuls, and members of their staffs and households, other than subjects

of the State in which they are employed, shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Courts of the said State in respect of any civil cause of action arising in the territory of the said State, provided that they shall enjoy the customary facilities for the performance of their duties

(iv) The Consul-General of Afghanistan and Consuls shall have a right to defend the interests of themselves or any members of their staffs and households who are subjects of their own Governments in any Court through pleaders or by the presence of one of the consulate officials, with due regard to local procedure and laws

(d) The Ministers, Consul-General, and Consuls of the two High Contracting Parties and the members of their staffs and households shall not take any steps or commit any acts injurious to the interests of the Government of the country to which they are accredited.

(e) The Ministers, Consul-General, and Consuls of the two Governments in either country shall be permitted to purchase or hire on behalf of their Governments residences for themselves and their staff and servants, or sites sufficient and suitable for the erection of such residence and grounds of a convenient size attached, and the respective Governments shall give all possible assistance towards such purchase or hire, provided that the Government of the country to which the Ministers or Consuls are accredited shall, in the event of an Embassy or Consulate being

permanently withdrawn, have the right to acquire such residence or lands at a price to be mutually agreed on; and provided that the site purchased or hired shall not exceed 20 jaribs in area

NOTE —Each Jarib= 60×60 yards, English
3,600 sq yards

(f) The Ministers, Consul-General, and Consuls of the two Governments shall not acquire any immovable property in the country to which they are accredited without the permission of the Government of the said country.

(g) Neither of the two High Contracting Parties shall found a mosque, church, or temple for the use of the public inside any of its Legations or Consulates, nor shall the Ministers, Consul-General, or Consuls of either Government or their Secretaries or members of their staffs and households engage in any political agitation or movement within the country to which they are accredited or in which they are residing

(h) The Ministers, Consul-General, and Consuls of the two High Contracting Parties shall not grant naturalisation or passports or certificates of nationality or other documents of identity to the subjects of the country in which they are employed in such capacity.

(i) The Ministers of the two High Contracting Parties, besides their own wives and children, may have with them not more than thirty-five persons,

and a Consul-General and Consuls, besides their own wives and children. not more than twenty persons. If it becomes necessary to employ in addition subjects of the Government of the country to which they are accredited, Ministers can employ not more than ten persons and Consul-General and Consuls not more than five persons

(j) The Ministers, Consul-General, and Consuls of the two High Contracting Parties shall be at liberty to communicate freely with their own Government and with other official representatives of their Government in other countries by post, by telegraph, and by wireless telegraphy in cypher or *en clair*, and to receive and despatch sealed bags by courier or post, subject to a limitation in the case of Ministers of 6 lb. per week, and in the case of a Consul-General and Consuls of 4 lb. per week, which shall be exempt from postal charges and examination, and the safe transmission of which shall, in the case of bags sent by post, be guaranteed by the Postal Departments of the two Governments.

(k) Each of the two Governments shall exempt from the payment of Customs or other duties all articles imported within its boundaries in reasonable quantities for the personal use of the Minister of the other Government or of his family, provided that a certificate is furnished by the Minister at the time of importation that the articles are intended for such personal use.

APPENDIX

I. Letter from British Representative to Sardar-i-Ala, the Afghan Foreign Minister.

(After compliments).

With reference to the provisions contained in Article 6 of the treaty concluded between the Government of Afghanistan and the British Government regarding the importation of arms and munitions into Afghanistan through India, I have the honour to inform and assure you that, although the British Government has in that article reserved to itself the right exercised by every nation to stop the transportation to a neighbouring country of arms and munitions, in the event of its not being assured of the friendly intentions of that country, the British Government has no desire to make trifling incidents an excuse for the stoppage of such arms and munitions. It would only be in the event of the Government of Afghanistan showing plainly by its attitude that it had determined on an unfriendly and provocative course of policy towards Great Britain contrary to the neighbourly treaty above mentioned that the latter State would exercise the right of stoppage. There is every ground for hope that such a contingency will never arise, in view of the friendly relations which are expected to spring from the treaty which has now been concluded.

(usual ending).

II.—Letter No 112, from Sardar-i-Ala, the Afghan Foreign Minister, to the British Representative at Kabul.

(After compliments).

Regarding the purchase of arms and munitions which the Government of Afghanistan buys for the protection of its rights and welfare, from the Governments of the world (and) imports to its own territory from the ports of Great Britain and British India, in accordance with Article 6 of the treaty between the two great Governments, I, in order to show the sincere friendship which my Government has with your Government, promise that Afghanistan shall, from time to time before the importation of the arms and munitions at British ports, furnish detailed list of those to the British Minister accredited to the Court of my sacred and great Government, so that the British Government having known and acquainted itself with the list and the number of imported articles should, in accordance with Article 6 of the treaty between the two Governments, afford the necessary facilities.

(usual ending).

Dated, 29th Aqrab, A H 1300.

III —Letter No 111, from Sardar-i-Ala, the Afghan Foreign Minister, to the British Representative at Kabul.

(After compliments)

As in Article 7 of the treaty (between) the two great Governments of Britain and Afghanistan, your Government has with great sincerity granted a discriminating exemption from Custom duties on the goods required by my Government and on the trade goods transported to Afghanistan through the ports of Great Britain and British India and has not imposed Customs on goods produced and manufactured in Afghanistan, I therefore also, in consideration of the friendship (between) the two Governments, write that my Government will not give the opportunity of establishing a Consul-General or Consul or representatives of the Russian Government at the positions and territories of Jelallabad, Ghaznee, and Kandahar, which are contiguous to the frontiers of India. If the Consulates or representatives of the Government of Russia are allowed in the parts mentioned, the Government of Afghanistan shall not have the above-mentioned right of exemption. Of course, the temporary association of the Russian Minister with his Majesty's move to Jelallabad in winter will be an exception.

(usual ending).

Dated, 30th Aqrab, A. H. 1300

IV.—Letter from British Representative to Sardar-i-Ala, the Afghan Foreign Minister

(After compliments).

As the conditions of the frontier tribes of the two Governments are of interest to the Government

of Afghanistan, I inform you that the British Government entertains feelings of good-will towards all the frontier tribes and has every intention of treating them generously, provided they abstain from outrages against the inhabitants of India. I hope that this letter will cause you satisfaction.

(usual ending).

The following Treaty of Peace, between Amanullah Khan and the British on 8th August 1919, is briefly reproduced for general information of the reader —

ARTICLE 1.—From the date of the signing of this Treaty there shall be peace between the British Government, on the one part, and the Government of Afghanistan on the other.

ARTICLE 2 —In view of the circumstances which have brought about the present war between the British Government and the Government of Afghanistan, the British Government to mark their displeasure, withdraw the privilege enjoyed by former Amirs of importing arms, ammunition or warlike munitions through India to Afghanistan.

ARTICLE 3.—The arrears of the late Amir's subsidy are furthermore confiscated, and no subsidy is granted to the present Amir.

ARTICLE 4.—At the same time, the British Government are desirous of the re-establishment of the

old friendship that has so long existed between Afghanistan and Great Britain, provided they have guarantees that the Afghan Government are, on their part, sincerely anxious to regain the friendship of the British Government. The British Government are prepared, therefore, provided the Afghan Government prove this by their acts and conduct, to receive another Afghan mission after six months for the discussion and settlement of matters of common interest to the two Governments and the re-establishment of the old friendship on a satisfactory basis.

ARTICLE 5.—The Afghan Government accept the Indo-Afghan frontier accepted by the late Amir. They further agree to the early demarcation by a British Commission of the undemarcated portion of the line west of the Khyber, where the present Afghan aggression took place, and to accept such boundary as the British Commission may lay down. The British troops in this side will remain on their present positions until such demarcation has been effected.

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AFGHANISTAN AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

Scale of Miles
0 50 100 150

Tribes shown thus

Rivers

Author's Route

Nachiketas, the seeker, is here enquiring of his teacher the Nature of Reality. Instead of stating it directly he is here putting the question as though it were a confusing conundrum. This is not to confuse the issue, nor is it a futile attempt to look himself very "wise". On a closer enquiry it becomes obvious that the three parts of the question, in themselves, and together, point out the vast area that he had covered himself independently during his endless meditations upon the life's happenings which so far had visited him.

His enquiry points out to a Truth that lies beyond virtue and vice, which is neither the cause nor the effect and which does not belong either to the past or to the future.

By the term virtue and vice it would be wise of us to understand that these represent the entire list of the pairs-of-opposites as joy and sorrow, success and failure, hope and despair, health and disease etc.

thought pursued by a highly cultured intellect sedulously trained in the wisdom of the *Sastras*.

Thus the question of the Brahmin boy to Lord Death was a demand for an explanation of that Unknown Factor which is Eternal and Immortal, which in itself is neither virtuous nor vicious, and without which neither virtue nor vice can have any existence, at all! The question clearly demands a discussion of the Atman, which is Pure Consciousness or the Awareness in us which is the Eternal Witness beaming to illuminate equally both virtue and vice.

The street lamp of its very nature throws a pool of light on to the road. Whatever portion of the passing parade comes into that light gets illuminated and remains illumined so long as they remain within the area lit up. The lamp is a mere witness; the light neither dances in joy when a honey-moon couple passes

that way, nor does the light reel in drunkenness when a reveller passes by, nor does it weep when it comes to illumine a tearful funeral procession !! Irrespective of the merits or demerits of the scene, the light in its own nature brightens up that which comes within its umbra.

Similarly. there is an All-witnessing Eternal Light-of-Wisdom the Divine Spark within us which is the source of All Life and the Light by which we become aware of the vice and virtue idea in our mind and intellect Certainly this great Witness, the Atman, is that which is other than virtue and vice, being Itself only a Witness.

Taking now the second part of the question let us enquire *what is that which is neither the cause nor the effect.* Every effect is the fulfilment of a cause and as such it is nothing other than the cause itself with reference to another period of time and changed conditions. A seed sown, the

cause, in time and under certain favourable conditions, becomes the *effect*, the seedling or the plant. All effects can be reduced similarly to their causes, and yet, each time, the question would arise, "what has caused this cause?" Thus, we would arrive at an unending chain and this difficulty is termed in Sanskrit system of logic as *Anavastha Dosham* (Regress Ad Infinitum). In order to circumvent this absurdity, the God-Principle, the accepted First Cause for the manifested *Jagat*, is considered by all schools of philosophy as "*Svayambu*", the Uncaused Cause, the Self-caused-Cause or the Self born

But the question of Nachiketas goes even beyond the God Principle or the Uncaused Cause, for, even though It is Uncaused, It is accepted as a *cause* and a cause has a justification and an existence only with reference to its effects. But the theme of enquiry here, it is to be clearly understood, is of that Principle which is

neither a cause nor an effect.

Thus, by this term also the Brahmin boy is enquiring of Lord Death for the Nature of the Witnessing Light of Intelligence which is the Knower of all the causes and effects, Himself being neither the cause nor the effect.

Lastly, by asking his teacher to explain *that which is neither the past nor the future* the Brahmin seeker is hungrily asking for instructions upon the Nature of the Ultimate Reality in us, the Self or the Atman which is realisable as Pure Awareness when we are neither rambling with our hopes and ambitions in the uncertain lands of the unborn time (the future) nor when we are not identifying ourselves with a team of ghost-like memories recruited from the cremation-ground of dead moments, months and years (the past).

We become *aware* of the Eternal Awareness in us to be ourselves only when we

cut away our meaningless chains with the past and stop our dangerous flirtations with the unborn future through the co-webs of silky hopes, ambitions and desires. In short, the contents of an immediate moment is Eternity or Immortality. To capture a moment without the shackles borrowed from the past or the future, and to thus become fully aware of the moment *in itself and as such*, is the culmination of the pilgrimmage of a Sadhaka. This is called *Samadhi*, and the experience gained therein is the Experience of Truth.

Nachiketas, now it is clear, must have spent many days and nights pondering constantly upon the happenings about and around him, as well as those within him. The All-witnessing Presence of Divinity, the Prompter, the Controller and the Regulator of our memories and yearnings, in short, the Recogniser of the future and the past, the Atman in us, is

the theme indicated by the question

Supremely self-confident of his own perfect book-knowledge (*Sastra Gyan*) Nachiketas is carefully warning Lord Death not to repeat what the *Sastras* have already informed or what he had already heard from his own *Guru*, but to expound upon That which Lord Death is 'seeing' (*Yath Tath Pasyasi*) It means, on the whole, that Lord Death is to discourse upon His own subjective experience of Truth

सर्वे वेदा यत् पदमामनन्ति

तपांसि सर्वाणि च यद् वदन्ति ।

यदिच्छन्तो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति

तत् ते पदं संग्रहेण ब्रवीम्यमित्येतत् ॥ १५ ॥

Sarve Veda Yat Padamamananthi

Tapamsi Sarvani Cha Yat Vadanthi

Yadichantho Brahmacharyam Charanthi

Tathe Padam Sangraheṇa Bravimi-Om Ithyatat.

(15) Yama said: "The goal (word) which all the Vedas speak of (praise),

which all penences proclaim, and wishing for which they lead the life of *Brahmacharam*, that goal (word) I will briefly tell thee — It is Om. ”

Here the preceptor with this Stanza starts his famous discourse which is the very core of this *Upanishad*. To begin with, Lord Death *in brief* summarises all that he has to say upon that which is beyond *Dharma* and *Adharma*, which is other than the cause and effect and which is something different from the past and the future. *Upanishad* itself conforms to a style wherein a redundant alphabet is considered to be a colossal sin and, in such a brief literature noted for super-human brevity, for maintaining which at places even language has been sometimes sacrificed, we are surely heading to some insurmountable difficulty, when Lord Death Himself warns us that He is going to be deliberately “*brief*” !!

The word *Padam* though looks so small

has an accepted volume of meaning over which even a text book can be written. There are something like 22 meanings for this two-lettered, innocent-looking word : such as way, place, abode, state, etc.

"All the *Uddas*', meaning all the *Upanishads*, though they argue differently, point out to the same Goal of Truth. The 108 *Upanishads* may be considered as so many arrow-marks along the circumference of the same circle, all of them pointing out to the same centre; just as geometrically no two arrows on the circumference can in such a case be parallel, so too, no two approaches belonging to two different *Upanishads* run parallel : and yet, all of them when produced meet at one and the same point, the Centre, the 'Truth'. Thus, "the Goal that is pointed out by all the *Upanishads* is," says Lord Death, "the Factor that you are asking me now and that Factor is in brief indicated by the pregnant formula OM".

All *Thapascharya* (all severe and conscious practices at self-control) are pursued and long years of studies are undertaken by living with a teacher a life of service, surrender and devotion, by seekers, only to realise this Truth (which you are asking for) which *in brief* is indicated by the symbol OM.

A close echo of this immortal stanza is heard in *Srimath Bhagavath Gita* Chapter VIII, stanza 9. And it is also noteworthy that in the *Gita* we have the second-half of this Mantra repeated substantially.

The Reality is hinted at by the significance of the symbol OM; but, thereby we shall not say that OM defines Truth, for to define Truth is to defile it. In the technique of self-perfection, as conceived of by the Rishis of the *Upanishads* the symbol OM is at once a formula indicating the Goal and a *Pratheka* (an idol of *Brahman*) for purposes of worship and *Saguna* (with Form) meditation

एतद्वयेवाक्षरं ब्रह्म
 एतद्वयेवाक्षरं परम् ।
 एतद्वयेवाक्षरं ज्ञात्वा
 यो यदिच्छति तस्य तत् ॥ १६ ॥

Yetatdhyae-Vaksharam Brahma
 Hastadhyae-Vaksharam Param
 Yetatdhyae Vaksharam Gyanthwa
 Yo Yad Lechhathi Tasya Tat.

(16) This word is verily Brahman ; this word is verily the highest ; he who knows this word, obtains verily, whatever he desires

Just as we found in the previous stanza that the word *padam* has twenty two meaning, here is yet another word *Akshara* which has something like fourteen different meanings ! Hence, the very language is called, in its pregnancy of suggestion and free scope of import in each word, as “ the cultured”, the *Samskrita*, or the *Samskaritha*. This is a language which the Aryans, probably, by generations of effort and

experimentation, evolved for the purpose of explaining to us through its mere wealth of suggestion and suggestiveness, the inexplicable Absolute Reality. Just as in this Ara of Speed words as U.N.Os, UNESCOS have crept into our language not only in America but even in this land (in such cases as the PEPSU etc.), to serve the purposes of the very spirit of the age, so too, in an era of deep meditation and seeking of the Self, they too had to evolve a new vocabulary and a fit language to serve their purposes. In fact, through no other language can we so effectively convey the Science of the Self and the Nature of the Reality as through Sanskrit.

In the stanza under discussion, Lord Death is explaining the worship of the very symbol OM. We have already stated that OM, besides indicating the Supreme Goal through its significance, also provides the meditator with a symbol or form of the Supreme Reality. We have also

seen earlier how, in the technique of the *Upanishad*, self-less worships and sacrifices in themselves constitute the most effective way of raising the inner purity and consequently the intellectual potency of an aspirant. Here, in this *mantra* we have an unequivocal declaration that the very formula OM is Reality; just as the very Siva *Linga* is to a devotee the very Siva *Tathwa* or as, we have in our world, the very crown, even when it is without the bald head of the king, is a symbol of might and royalty. Those who doubt this fact would do well to experiment upon a piece of the Indian Tri-colour upon the streets of any market place cursing and stamping it under their feet ! If they are not mobbed by a patriotic crowd, it would be, perhaps, because, the insulting action was enacted too late in the night !

A Vedantin is not as is generally believed by the fashion-crowd, a blasphemer of religions or an iconoclast. That

he is not an idol breaker is clear from the very fact that in his very Bible, the *Upanishads*, you are now reading the worship of a symbol advised and advocated by the all-knowing Godly Rishis themselves ! If at all there be in India any sect that to-day dances to the mad tunes of some imaginary fanaticism and goes about condemning idol worship, they are doing a great injustice to themselves and to the very Science of Self-perfection. As individuals the erring ones may be ignored in our understanding that they are victims of their own ignorance of our great *Sruties*. But, as regards the sect they shall deserve among the intelligent and the educated as much respect as the social criminals deserve. Beware of them ! Shun them ! Avoid them as you would the 'pox !!

The OM symbol is not only an idol representing the Absolute Reality but it also represents the "Relative" Reality. The worshiper or the meditator can

meditate upon it as the Supreme or as the "Relative". And through deep and long meditation when the meditator, comes to discover a personal identity with the very thing the symbol stands for, that is, when he realises his identity with the symbol he gains the Realm of his Identification. If a meditator has become one with the meditated and if to him the symbol is a representation of the *Apara Brahman* (Hiranyagarbha), or the Total Mind he gains that state of existence available in *Brahmaloka*. If on the other hand, the symbol represented for a successful meditator the Supreme Reality he comes to gain in stages a greater inner purification, a deeper power of concentration and through long ponderings upon the Nature of the Self he gains in the end an identity that *Ayam Ahamasmi*, meaning, "this I am".

"Obtains verily whatever he desires":—In this statement Lord Death is indicating a

Truth now accepted as a verified fact supported by observed happenings in life in the world of modern psychology. "As you think so you become", when the thinking comes to gain the necessary *potency*. In fact, we have only to wish or desire, and our desire or wish must come to be true !

You may wonder whether the Swami has now gone slightly off his head, since, it must be your experience in life that almost none of your desires has ever come true ! Friends, Chinmaya is not yet mad nor is the *Sruti* a mere textbook of mad ravings of a generation of lunatics. Since the *Sruti* cannot go wrong this Sadhu who is only trying to unfold the significances in these *mantras* cannot also be wrong. Again, just because there is a *Sruti* declaration, "fire is cold", we shall not handle fire carelessly or put a few glowing coal pieces tied in a kerchief on our head and eyes on a summer afternoon ! If personal experience is seemingly against the *Sruti*

words certainly the *Srut* text must be taken to mean and hint at some significance deeper than the obvious word meaning.

Why is it then that none of our desires comes to be true? Let us analyse ourselves.

We are under a delusory idea that thought is an idle, impotent happening, merely within ourselves. In this misconception is the very seed of our *samsara* limitations and sorrows. Thought has Godly powers. As each thought sweeps across the mind its secret potency rises up in front of us as an agent willing and ready to manifest that thought as a reality around us. This is something like the mysterious Djinn in the "*Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp*". Aladdin had to merely rub the Lamp and out came the Djinn who saluted his master, a ready slave to execute any wish the master might express; and we know that nothing was impossible for the

Lamp's Djinn. A thousand-fold powerful, magnanimous and adorable is the Djinn of the Mind that rises in us, a ready and willing slave, to execute our thought-commands.

And yet, Friends, you are still asking the same old question with your blinking eyes, "but Swami, aren't you mad? You are talking just the opposite of what we are experiencing, although the Djinn idea is, we admit, quite an entertaining idea of hope"

May be, dear seekers, we may yet discover the cause of our failures, if we are *actually* failing. As we said before, the adorable spirit of thought, the Djinn of the Mind, rises up in front of us as it were, with each desire that whistles through our mental plane! With the ending of the thought the Djinn with faithful anxiety and sincerity turns upon his heels to sail forth to execute the order given by man's

conscious mind. But alas! Ere the spirit could take the first step to rush out on his errand another thought wave of desire has risen up in the inner world calling the Djinn back to take more orders; and at the command of the mind the Djinn revolves round upon his heels again to face his master.

Sad indeed is the plight of this Godly agent, the presiding deity of the human mind! This creature of all-might and all-power is made, under our own confusing commands and contradictory orders, to stand and whirl like a top *each* half of the circle representing a definite command given and the other half showing a definite but vain attempt made by the spirit at its execution! But the desire power does not allow it any chance at all to fulfil itself!

A mind tossed by contending thoughts or a mind plagued by an eruption of pox-like desires is the mind that is weeping

over its own impotency! If a single-pointed, mind, can wish for anything to the exclusion of any other contending thoughts or desires, it shall at once be fulfilled.

Yoga viewed in this sense is a technique of controlling, conserving, preserving and directing the mental dynamism through a chosen channel of application. One who is well-versed in this technique and has, therefore, a complete control over his mind is a God upon earth whose wishes become, as they cross their mind, accomplished facts. It is because of our own mad thinking that we are exhausting in vain all our Godly potencies within.

If you start from your home to the office and on your way allow yourselves to be a slave to your own indecisions and thus start walking *forward* (as the thought of duty calls you office ward) and *backward* (when the thoughts of the joys of idle sleep pass through your mind) then,

even late at night you shall still be walking, having reached neither the office nor the home ! The only way to reach the office is to maintain the desire to reach the office constantly in the mind and physically working up to it, ignoring, and thus controlling, all other dissimilar thought waves

So too in the accomplishments of our desires. And in fact all of us shall find that to a large extent what we are today is the product of or a fulfilment of our own desires which have gained the required, maturity and potency in us

If you are only a typist you have only desired with sufficient potency to become only a successful typist. If you can desire yourself to become the President of this country with a consistency of purpose and sincerity of devotion, and maintaining this idea can faithfully work up to it without any contradictory desires reaching your mind to dissipate the mental

energies, the Mind's Djinny shall take you ultimately in a 'flying-carpet' to Delhi where you shall sit in that august chair and perhaps regret its pin-pricks !

We have indulged in rather too long a discussion; but if thereby the pessimistic crowd of suicides who form the majority of our sad, desperate, immoral and degraded generation could regain for themselves a little more of self-confidence and the awareness of their own potencies that lie uncultivated and unclaimed within, this sadhu feels that he will be justified in this necessary digression.

Thus, if a meditator meditates upon OM with a desire to enjoy the subtler joys of *Brahma Loka* he gains that plane of consciousness; and if the meditator with single-pointed devotion meditates upon OM, in a Nachiketa-like-spirit of seeking the Ultimate and the Immortal, he shall certainly become 'That'.

एतदालम्बनं श्रेष्ठमेतदालम्बनं परम् ।

एतदालम्बनं ज्ञात्वा ब्रह्मलोके महीयते ॥१७॥

Yetatalambanam Sreshtam Yetatalambanam Param
Yetatalambanam Gyatwa Brahmalokae Maheeyate.

(17) Most glorious is this support. This the supreme-most support. He who has realised (known) this support comes to revel in the Brahma-world.

“ *Gyaneneerathu Kanalyam,* ’ (by Knowledge alone is liberation) is the fundamental *siddhanta* of all Vedantins. However severely we may beat the serpent-in-the-rope all through the night we can never kill it ! But when a beam of light is thrown on the rope and thereby we gain the *knowledge* of the rope, the serpent shall end instantaneous-ly. Similarly by the subjective experience of the Knowledge Absolute alone can we become the Eternal and thus reach the Peak of Perfection and the End of all successes.

But here the *Upanishad* is advising for the benefit of the less evolved soul a discipline of *Upasana* or worship. And it is the clear declaration of the *Śruti* in this stanza that the successful worshipper reaches the *Brahma Loka*, the state of *Hiranyagarbha*; which of course is not the highest

In Sanskrit, *Brahma Loka* can be milked to yield two meanings as *Brahma-roopi Loka* (a world of the nature of the Self) or as *Brahman Loka* (the world of the glorious Brahman, the creator). The worshipper (*Upasaka*) through his actions (*Karma*) ensures only his entry into the World of the Creator, while the one who meditates upon the significances suggested by the symbol OM, and knowing or realising his own personal identity with that Truth, through this Knowledge (*Gyana*) becomes the Absolute Himself. Thus, in this stanza we may discover that Lord Death has hinted at the goal of both *Karma* (Worship) and *Gyana* (Knowledge).

न जायते म्रियते वा विपश्चित्
 नायं कृतञ्चिन्न बभूव कश्चित् ।
 अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
 न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ १८ ॥

Na Jayathe Mriyathe Na Vipashchith
 Nayan Kuthas-Chinna Babhoova Kaschith
 Ajo Nitya Saswathovam Purano
 Na Hanyathae Hanyamano Sareerae

(18) "The intelligent Atman is not born, nor does He die; He did not spring from anything, and nothing sprang from him; Unborn Eternal, Everlasting Ancient, He is not slain although the body is slain.

Earlier in our discussions we emphasised how the *Kathopanishad* mantras were evidently an immediate inspiration of Bhagwan Vyas to crystalise his matured thinking and full-realisation of the Truth, in his own *Upanishad*-poem, the *Sreemat Bhagavat Gita*. You all know how in Gita the entire first chapter and portions of the second are spent out in providing an

enimitable background, similar to the story of the Nachiketas in this *Upanishad*, wherein to the presence of an immortal Teacher, Lord Krishna, a disciple Sri Arjuna is brought, in an attitude of surrender, devotion and seeking. And the tenth sloka in the Divine Song (chapture II), sung by the Lord Himself, is a substantial reproduction of even the very words of the *mantra* that is now under discussion

You must all remember that the pointed question of Nachiketas was to explain to him that which Lord Death had experienced Himself personally, that Eternal Factor which is beyond virtue and vice, which is other than cause and effect and which is other than past or future. During our discussions of the stanza we clearly found that the aspiring Brahmin boy was enquiring after the Nature of the Ever-witnessing Spark of Awareness, the *Atman* in the body. Lord Death, in answering him, we also found, had first dealt with

the Symbol of Truth, the OM. Now in this stanza the teacher is directly hinting at the Divine Spark that presides over the matter envelopments constituting our body, mind and intellect.

'Atman is not born nor does he die' :—All perishable finite things undergo modifications and the entire set of modifications are classified under five headings namely, birth, growth, disease, decay and death. In this stanza, we are told that the Truth Principle gracing our within is without the first and the last of these pentamerous modifications i.e., the birth and the death. Naturally, they mean to incorporate within themselves all the other unsaid three modifications also. That which undergoes modifications is a perishable finite quantity; in denying modifications the teacher is hinting at the Eternal Nature of the Soul of man.

The Soul is unborn; only the body is born. You must be remembering our

preliminary talks when we discussed exhaustively these points in general. And yet, to help you at your recapitulation we may add here the following

The pot maker makes a pot. The pot is born. But the space in the pot being itself eternally one with the outer space is not created or born. The pot may break. That which is made is perishable. But with the breaking of the pot the pot-space is not broken. The unborn pot-space knows no death.

Similarly, the Self or the Truth is never born and naturally never dies. The false ego-centre through vulgar meditations and ignorant thinking has moulded out a perishable body, mind-and-intellect-equipment in which the All-pervading Eternal Truth seems to be confined. The body equipment might perish, but not the Truth Principle.

And again, the Pot-maker did not make a pot and then pour "some space" into the

pot; the pot-maker worked in space and as he moulded the pot he could mould it only with space already inside

Similarly, the body is born in Atman, with Atman and this Truth Principle is ever the presiding deity within and without the body during its birth, growth, decay, disease and death.

With the above ideas in mind the second line of the *mantra* must now stand out self-explained.

हन्ता चेन्मन्यते हन्तुं
 हतश्चेन्मन्यते हतम् ।
 उभौ तौ न विजानीतो
 नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ १६ ॥

Hanta Chaet-Manyathae Hantum
 Hata-schiet Manyathae Hatam
 Ubhow Taow Na Vijaneetho
 Nayam Hanthee Na Hanyathae.

(19) If the slayer thinks "I slay," and

if the slain thinks, "I am slain", then both of them do not know well. This slays not nor is this slain.

Again to point out a parallel in thought which amounts to almost an actual borrowing we may look up the nineteenth *sloka* in Gita Chapter II, where the above *mantra* is repeated, especially in its second line.

If a murderer feels that by wounding the body, the Atman is killed, or if the murdered comes to despair at his death-bed that his Atman is dying, both of them are under a delusory conception that the body is the soul. The stupidity of such thinking becomes more pregnantly apparent to us if we were to say that we have broken the space-in-the cup when we threw the cup down !!!

This *mantra* reveals itself its meaning to anyone who has carefully followed our discussions upon the previous *mantras*.

अणोरणीयान् महतो महीया-
 नात्मास्य जन्तोर्निहितो गुहायाम् ।
 तमक्रतुः पश्यति वीतशोको
 धातुप्रसादान्महिमानमात्मनः ॥ २० ॥

Anoraneeyan Mahatho Maheeyan
 Atmasya Jantor-Nihitho Guhayam
 Tama-krathu Passyathi Veethasoko
 Dhathu Prasada Mahimana-Matmanaha.

(20) The Atman subtler than the subtle, greater than the great, is seated in the heart of each living being. He who is free from desire, with his mind and the senses composed, beholds the majesty of the Self and becomes free from sorrow.

This is one of the much quoted stanzas, a favourite one with all preachers and philosophic writers. In charming brevity the *mantra* hints at a treasure of suggestions, almost indicating directly the Atman which is the Goal of all seekers.

By defining the Atman as *the smallest of*

the small a mere dull intellect might understand that the Atman is not yet seen or discovered because the scientific world has not yet constructed a sufficiently powerful microscope! But to a philosophic mind, cultured in the ways of the *sasthas*, the statement is an ample explanation of the most subtle nature of the *Atma Tatwa*. Had *Sruti* ended her definition with the above statement alone it would have denied the volume and girth of things and beings any connection with Truth. This probable mis-understanding is negated by the additional epithet that the Atman is also "*greater than the greatest*". Here the great is meant to cover the entire universe of manifested existence; and Truth, according to the *Sruti* not only pervades, envelops and penetrates through and through the *Jagat*, but also extends farther than the crores of universes that whirl round in space! This is endorsed by a similar statement in *Gita*, made by the

Lord Himself, wherein He says, "the *Jagat* formed of the entire manifested worlds spreads itself out in their delusions and disturbances, Oh ! Arjun, only a one-fourth of my Real Nature" This means that three quarters of Truth is yet in its Pure Nature, untouched by the play of duality, created by the mysterious jugglery of the mind, called *Maya*.

Truth is described here as both the tiniest of the tiny and also wider than the widest This means that Pure Consciousness is an Eternal, All-pervading-Essence, and that even the minutest space conceivable is pervaded by this great Divine Influence. And after these statements when a description that it is lodged in the heart of all living beings comes, a western student becomes baffled, and hence their cry *Kathopanishad* is a compilation of floating *slokas* that had worn out in their usage even at the time of their compilation. !!

There are but some false evidences to prove anything of this sort To say so is to tell a lie Truth is here expressed as 'residing in the heart' only to indicate the point where the individual can, through meditation, ultimately come to realise, It

The vedantic *sadhana* of hearing and reflecting culminates in its final fulfilment only through the Godly vocation to which man alone is heir to, namely, meditation. Meditation is the process by which man can rise from his shackles of bondages and attachment and come to the State of Freedom and Joy of a God. And this process by which we can realise the ideal of perfection, Eternal Bliss, indicated by the previous epithet, is hinted at in this stanza

Indeed, the Aryan personality is not Satisfied with a mere ideology, however great it may be, if it is not advocated along with a practical system of methods by which

one can realise and live that ideology. Free from desires, if one, through long and arduous practices, gains control over one's sense organs and mind, that sacred one shall come to experience the Self-effulgent, Eternal, Self. Therefore in his realisation of his true identity as the Atman, he goes beyond the destinies of sorrow and pain, because, they are the destinies of the body and the mind only. "As Atman I am not the body mind-intellect instrument", the fatigue of the car is not the fatigue of the owner riding in it and the owner knows fully well that he is not his car.

With a view to entertaining you all the Swami may invite you here to a short ramble into the woods of the Eternal quarrel between monism and dualism. Both of them exist on the authority of the *Śruties*. Here in the stanza under discussion we have the phrase *Dhathu Prasadaḥ* which is interpreted by the dualists as to mean Lord's grace (*Dhathu*

Prasada) where *Dhathr* means the supporter, namely, the Creator of the Universe which is of course the God Principle. Hence, the dualist claim that this *Atma Tattva* can be realised only when the seeker gets the permission and the blessings of *Dhathr*

The same epithet is interpreted by the *Advaitins* as to mean *Dhathu Samprasada*, meaning, "by the purification of the senses and the mind" To the non-dualists the outer world of sense-objects has an existence only with relation to their corresponding sense organs and the synchronising machine of a mind behind them all.

Thus, the same word is explained in two different ways by the two schools of philosophic thinking. Both when viewed independently, or approached *intellectually*, would seem to over power us with the strength of their individual arguments and the efficiency of their irresistible logic. Naturally, the lesser folks who have studied

these great masters only partially grow fanatical and fight among themselves in support of their beliefs as though they were annointed for that purpose ! But to a true seeker who is working on the Path and is trying industriously to live the life Divine the seeming contradictions in the philosophies of Madhwa, Ramanuja and Sankara whiten away into a cool understanding of the different standpoints from which each of them is talking to us.

The sum total of the efforts put into any piece of work slowly rises in its potency until at last when it equates with the quantity of power and dynamism required the work gets accomplished in a glorious success. So too, in the various efforts put in by a seeker in perfecting himself These practices add on their share to the total pool until at last the cumulative effect of all the practices becomes a divine power by the blessing of which the final achievement is gained. To us pure Vedantins, living

the principles of Vedanta, there can never be any school that opposes us • for; Vedantins' wisdom can bring its light into any problem and resolve it in terms of the Eternal Truth.

आसीनो दूरं व्रजति
 शयानो याति सर्वतः ।
 कस्तं मदामदं देवं
 मदन्यो ज्ञातुमर्हति ॥ २१ ॥

Aseeno Duram Vrajathi
 Sayano Yathi Sarvath
 Kastham Madam Madam Devam
 Mdanvo Gnatu-Marhathi

(21) "Sitting he goes far; lying he goes everywhere. Who else, therefore save myself, is able to comprehend the God who rejoices and rejoices not ?

The indescribable *Atma Tatva* when forced to confine Itself to the limited meanings of a finite language, the phrases

and sentences employed must get blasted out into a jig-jaw-puzzle-like confusing contrariness ! It is only the fittest student, who has the necessary heart and head, that can, through the trolis of the words, peep beyond and actually discover the beauty and the truth that lie beyond ; and this becomes fully successful only when the student gets a chance to listen to discourses upon the *Śruti mantras* from a fit master

“*Sitting he goes far*” — Pure Consciousness that seems to preside over faculties in the body is conceived of here as the Atman *sitting*. But the moment a mental wave vitalised by this Truth in us flies from here to Europe to contemplate upon the sunny land of Italy it seems to meet therein Existence or Consciousness already present there. In this sense, the Atman is said to be making *travels far* into distances though in fact, the Absolute, All-pervading Truth cannot and will not move

When we say that we are going to the next room it is a clear indication that we are leaving the spot where we are now and travelling towards a point where *now we are not* and where we shall be in time. This movement is possible only when the thing is a limited entity. When it is an All-pervading Truth, it actually cannot go anywhere, since, there is no spot where it is not already. For example, *my right hand* cannot move into *my right hand* since, *my right hand* is all-pervading *in my right hand*: no two substance can occupy one and the same place during the same period of time, is a scientific fact known, applauded and appreciated by the modern world. Thus, Atman or the Life Centre is a motionless entity, but seems to be moving only when it is conditioned by the mind and functioning as its manifestations, as thought waves !

The same idea is repeated for purposes of emphasis and clarification in "*Lying he*

9. *सर्वज्ञः सर्वशक्तिः*

The second line of the *namda* seems to be a quotation from an arrogant monster of incorrigible vanity and egoism, at the peak of an evening discourse wherein the listeners were patient enough to encourage his vanity by applauses ¹⁰ *“Who else is able to comprehend the Guru?”* Friends, no such egoism is meant here. If Lord Death were so egoistic He would not have been the Master of Knowledge and Self-realisation as He was, and naturally not a Guru fit for *Sadhya* to bring into her palace as a tutor for her beloved son, Nachiketas.

The Master means to state that one who has gained sufficient control over his mind and intellect, through a sincere discipline of self-control alone can, through the higher meditations on the Nature of Truth, reach the cumulative glory of subjectively experiencing the All-pervading

Truth as described in the above pleasant language of contradications If the mind is not pure, the Truth realised shall *not* be the Absolute.

Like a mirror Truth truly reflects the object in front of it; Mr Das if he stands in front of his mirror^o in his bath-towel or in his office dress or in his bridal robe or even in any fancy dress he chooses to wear the reflection in the mirror reflects faithfully the same Das in the particular form of dress he has worn. An impure intellect cannot experience but the sullied Truth !

अशरीरं शरीरेषु

अनवस्थेष्ववस्थितम् ।

महान्तं विभुमात्मानं

मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥ २२ ॥

Asareeram Sareereshu

Anavasthee-schwasthitam

Mahantam Vibhu-Mathmanam

Mathwa Dheero Na Sochathi

(22) . The wise man, who knows the *Atman* as bodiless, seated firmly in perishable bodies, Great and All-pervading, does never grieve

Our wrong understanding that we are the body-mind-intellect-equipment and that there is no other greater Truth in us at all, is the gurgling source of all the pains and agonies, disease and death, despairs and dejections, hopes and desires that befall us. When in the maturity of discrimination an involved intellect and mind, like that of Nachiketas, come to enquire and know, seek and discover for himself the *Atman* within, such a saintly one, at the peak of evolution, dwelling in the Realm of perfection comes to identify himself permanently as that Truth principle, and thereafter, naturally, he shall know no pain or limitation. This idea is explained here in this *mantra*.

All that man has to do to become God is to renounce totally his ego centric vanity

are the Mahatmas who can recapitulate and sing all the *mantras* in the ten main *Upanishads* often with the texts of the *Sankara Bhasyam*. Admirable though these achievements be in the material plane where we are ready to adore, *admire* and appreciate the powers of the intellect, the *Sruti* here pooh-poohs them as a sheer waste and a filthy discharge! A mere memorising of the stanza or even cultivating a capacity to discourse upon the *mantras* shall not take any individual to the Goal pointed out by the *Sruti*.

Again, there are some who place an undue importance on merely attending *Sat Sangs*. Such men are ready to undergo any amount of botheration, undertake any long journey, and however often it needs be, only if they can be in a hall where some spiritual discourse is at full swing. And having reached the hall many of them invariably discover a comfortable corner where in the diffused light they can

gloriously retire and, leaning on a wall or pillar, can silently set their minds to race backwards towards their homes and friends ! Bodily they sit in *Sat Sang* but mentally and intellectually they are closed bottles ever revelling in their own poison contents !!

This Swami is not exaggerating; there must be at least, half a dozen here who have not heard what we have been *just now* roaring through this deafening microphone !!

If neither study, nor memorising, nor *Sat Sang* can give us a subjective experience of the Reality does it mean that Self realisation is an impossibility ? The *Sruti* mantra in its second-half asserts that realisation is possible, only, that we have to pursue the methods advocated by the Rishis with sincerity, faith and consistency. Hence *Sruti* says that the aspirant who seeks diligently the Atman *to him the Atman reveals Itself*.

The seeking consists of the slow removal of all the negativities in our physical and psychological make up, such as caste and class prejudicess, vanities of being rich or preoccupation with the tragedies of our poverty, the selfishnesses, egoism, hatreds, jealousies, greeds and lusts, which in their aggregate constitute the barricade that keeps us away from the land of our own Real Nature. The details of this gruesome Self-created mistake, by which we have come to sign our own Self-choosen exile, are hinted at in the following stanza.

नाविरतो दुश्चरितात्

नाशान्तो नासमाहितः ।

नाशान्तमानसो वापि

प्रज्ञानेनैनमाप्नुयात् ॥ २४ ॥

Na Viratho Duscharitath

Na-Santho Na-Samahithah

Na-Santhamanaso Vapi

Pragynane-Nama-Mapnuayath

(24) But he who has not turned away from bad conduct, whose senses are not subdued whose mind is not concentrated, whose mind is not pacified, can never obtain this Atman by knowledge.

This stanza is to be read along with the previous one, since, it seems to be a continuation of the ideas expressed in the earlier one where the Eternal Peace and the Joy of Perfection that accrue with the Darsan of Atman, are denied to those who have merely learnt the texts by-heart or to those who can only give long discourses upon them or again, to those who are religiously regular only in reaching the halls of such discourses "

Here Lord Death continues explaining the inner barricades that we in our ignorance have raised between ourselves and our own Self ! !

Self-realisation and the consequent Joy of God-hood are denied in this *Mantra*

to him (a) who has not turned away from acts of *Adharma*. (b) who has not brought his senses under control, whose mind has not therefore gained any capacity to concentrate and (c) who has not found in his mind a peace with itself, because of its thudding palpitations and anxieties regarding the fruits of its actions

In this *Mantra* we have all the hints necessary by which we can come to intensify our spiritual *sadhana*. First of all the *Sadhaka* must retire from all his activities which are immoral and unethical. Unless one is well grown in his moral and ethical life no amount of *japa* or *tapa*, bell and flower, sandalwood and camphor, temples churches and mosques can be of any help to him in his spiritual growth. The meaningless cry against the inefficiency of religion that we are now so accustomed to hear is all raised, perhaps, by sincere devotees themselves, who are fathers to some twelve children, who will tell any lie (if

thereby they can gain even a quarter-anna-com) and who can taste the sugar in their cup-of-milk better *only* when they have the added satisfaction of scalding a few ants along with their spoons of sugar ! Neither are they self-controlled nor are they honest, nor non-violent; and our entire religion rests upon the triple-principles of *Brahmacharya*, *Satya* and *Ahimsa*

When an individual has lived at least for a time respecting *Dharma* he has the necessary gate-pass to the arena of spiritual practices. Then again, to gain the higher worlds of greater perfections the aspirant should learn slowly the art of controlling his sense organs from their habits of revelling mad and gushing forth ceaselessly into the backwaters of sorrow-breeding sense objects. By a pursuit of *Dharma* actions, an individual comes to limit his activities and when he gains a certain amount of control over his *Indriyas*, the mind of its own accord, grows in its potencies to concentrate and to apply

itself with greater vigour and efficiency. Even at this stage the seeker will not be fully fit for success if he has not disciplined himself to get completely detached from his mental anxieties for the enjoyment of the *mats* of his *Tapascharya* (self-denials and such other methods of subduing the senses).

Lord Death, in short, means that there are very few, indeed, who are such full-fledged and sincere seekers ! At the same time a fit candidate for *Vedanta* practices is not a fairy one who falls from the sky with the morning dew and who, nestling for a while in the opening buds falls down with the weight of his own sheer competency " A fit student is pressed out between the diligent urgency felt and the sincerity of pursuit put in : and how rare are such Press-Houses "

It was with this idea in mind that Lord Death was compelled to cry earlier in *Mantra* 21 "*Who else, therefore, save myself, is able to comprehend the God*".

यस्य ब्रह्म च क्षत्रं च

उमे भवत श्रोदनः ।

मृत्युर्यस्योपसेचनं

क इत्या वेद यत्र सः ॥ २५ ॥

(एति प्रथमोऽध्यायः द्वितीया वल्ली)

Yasya Brahma Cha Kshatram Cha

Uma Bhavatha Odanah

Mrithyur yasyopasechanam

Ka Ittha Veda Yatra Sah

(Eti Pradhama Adhyaya Dwiteeya Valli)

(25) Of whom, the *Brahmana* and the *Kshatriya* classes are (as it were) but food, and death itself a condiment (for pickle), how can one thus know where that Atman is "

(Thus ends the Second Section in the First Chapter)

The Supreme Reality, which is the Self, sought by the seekers is the presiding Factor that makes possible the world of names and forms to exist and function

Truth envelopes all *Jagat*. The inert and

dead shadows can work themselves out only in a medium of Pure Consciousness or Pure Existence. The perceived worlds of names-and-forms, can exist only in Existence. This idea is poetically hinted at in this *Mantra* when it says that even the *Brahmana* and the *Kshatriya* classes, who are considered to be the very best among men, (and man is the very roof-and-crown of things) are but mere food to be swallowed and degested with comfort and ease by the Supreme! In short, all the manifested world is but a morsel for Him to be digested within a few moments !! And to such a Supreme, even the threatening process of death is but a pickle that adds extra taste to Its appetite !

When such be the might and power of Pure Consciousness in Its Absolute Nature, the trend is that it is rather difficult for ordinary mortals to realise their identity as the *Atman*, unless, of course, they are ready to undergo the earlier explained processes of self-purification and self-perfection.



प्रथमोऽध्यायः

CHAPTER I

तृतीया वल्ली

SECTION (III)



अहं तु नारायणदासदासः
 दासस्यदासस्य च दास दास ।
 अन्येभ्य ईशो जगतो नराणा
 तस्मादहं चान्यतरोऽस्मि लोके ॥

I am verily the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of the servant of Narayana ' He is the Lord of the World of Men, and I am one of the two ''

वासुदेवस्य ये भक्ताः शान्तास्तद्गतमानसा ।
 तेषां दासस्य दासोऽहं भवे जन्मनि जन्मनि ॥

May I become, birth after birth, a servant to the servant of those *Bhaktas* of Vasudeva (The Supreme Reality that is the Substratum for the phenomenal world of names and forms) who with inner peace and tranquillity have their minds absorbed in Him (That).

(*Pandava Githa*)

प्रथमोऽध्यायः

CHAPTER 1

तृतीया वल्ली

Section (III)

ऋतं पिबन्तौ सुकृतस्य लोके

गुहां प्रविष्टौ परमे परार्धे ।

च्छायातपौ ब्रह्मविदो वदन्ति

पञ्चाग्नयो ये च त्रिणाचिकेताः ॥ १ ॥

Ritam Pibandoo Sukritasya Lokae

Guham Pravishtho Paramae Parardhae

Chchayathapow Brahmanavidoo Vadanthi

Panchagnayo Ye Cha Trinachikethah

(1) The two who enjoy the fruits of their good works being seated in the cavity of the heart, the Seat of the Supreme, the knowers of Brahman call them shadow and light ; as also the performers of the Five-Fold Fire and those who have propitiated three times the Nachiketa Fire

In this section we have the famous and immortal metaphor of the charriot explaining the *Atman* and the body. In the charriot sits the driver and the owner. In the body stays the *Paramatman*, the Self, and the *Jivatman*, the Ego.

To introduce these two factors, the *Atma* (Self) and the *Jiva* (Ego), we have here, in the very opening stanza of this *Valli*, a declaration unanimously made by all the realised saints of Knowledge and endorsed by the faithful householder Pundits. All of them declare that though the body seems to be controlled and directed by these two factors, one of them is but the shadow-replica of the other !!

The shadow or reflection has no independent existence of its own. It exists only with reference to the light or the illumined object.

Desire-prompted thoughts rise and fall in waves eternally in their own rhyme and

rhythm in the mental lake of an uncultured man-animal. This mad death-dance of the rumbling thought waves, kicking about their pranks in front of the Wisdom Light in us naturally throws in front of the mind a composite shadow-form, ever trembling and changing.

The individual in his extrovertness, gazing on outwardly, views this shadow and identifies himself with it. The shadow represents the "I-ego" .. the *Samsara*, who suffers the mortal agonies of his physical pains, mental tortures, intellectual failures, and spiritual bankruptcy ! This shadow is called the *Jivatman* and the Light that causes it, the I-Ego the God Principle in us, is called the *Param-atman*.

The fruits of actions are enjoyed *only* by the individual soul, (*Jivatma*), the "I-ego". Dual number is here used, instead of the singular, hence, the *Sruti* statement comes to indicate that both the

Supreme Soul and the *individual soul* are partners in enjoying the fruits of actions. This should not be understood in its literal word meaning, for, *Sruti* would be thereby contradicting Herself Her incessant declaration, oft-repeated and always maintained, that the Eternal, All-full Atman is neither a doer nor an enjoyer. He alone is the illuminator of all doings and enjoyments

Any yet, there is in the *mantra* the usage of the dual number when it says, "the *two* enjoy the fruits of their good works". This difficulty is solved by *Sri* Sankaracharya in his commentary. He says that the shadow "I-ego" has no existence at all without the presence of the Light Principle in the I-Ego, and so, they are coupled together in a *general way*. Examples of this type of coupling are also seen often in our day-to-day transactions in life. When a crowd of people are moving on, and, although there are some among them who have no umbrellas (nor *Khadi*-caps),

we, in our general conversations, indicate them all together collectively as the umbrella carriers (the Congressmen).

In a similar sense because of the seeming co-existence of the *Jivatman* and the *Paramatman*, the "false-I" and the Real-I, the delusory enjoyments of the fruits of actions, which is the lot of the *Jivatman* is coupled with the Witnessing Eternal Light of Intelligence, the *Paramatman*

Both of them are explained here to be seated in the cavity of the heart, where intelligence resides. This idea of the intelligence being in the heart-space has been repeated before so often, that we need not pause here any more to discuss it in detail.

यः सेतुरीजानाना-

मक्षरं ब्रह्म यत् परम् ।

अभयं तितीर्षतां पारं

नाचिकेतं शाकेमहि ॥ २ ॥

Yah Sethureejanana-

Maksharam Brahma Yat Param

Abhayam Thithirshatam Param

Nachiketam Sakemahi

(2) We are able to know the fire which is the bridge of those who perform sacrifices, and also the highest Immortal Brahman, fearless, and the other shore for those who wish to cross the Ocean of *Samsara*.

These two opening stanzas of this section seem to be later interpolations as they individually explain two different themes and in themselves do not seem to possess any direct connection with the discussions that are yet to follow in this chapter.

Sethu (bridge or refuge) —The 'Nachiketa Fire' that was discussed before is described here as a bridge that connects this mortal world of ours with the shores of that immortal life in the heavens. This stanza seems to glorify both the Goals of

Karma (Worship) and *Gyana* (Knowledge)
 The first part of the *mantra* asserts that this Sacred Fire, if performed with sincerity, faith and devotion, as prescribed earlier, can lead the Ego-centre-soul to that realm of consciousness called the heaven, and the duration of existence in embodiment there being longer than life upon this globe, in a relative sense it is indeed an immortal life.

In the second part of the *mantra* there is a glorification of the goal reached by a *Gyani* through his meditations upon the Nature of the Soul and its relationship with the Total Soul

आत्मानं रथिनं विद्धि
 शरीरं रथमेव तु ।
 बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि
 मनः प्रग्रहमेव च ॥ ३ ॥

Athmanam Radhinam Vidhi
 Sareeram Radhameva Thu
 Budhim Thu Saradheem Vidhi
 Manah Pragrahमेव Cha

(3) Know the Atman as the Lord of the chariot, the body as the chariot; know intellect as the charioteer and the mind again as the reins

With this stanza we begin the discussion of an analogy, famous in the Hindu philosophical literature often quoted by authors and orators. Herein, we may detect also the exact point in this famous *Upanishad* which probably gave all the fire inspiration necessary for Sree Vyas Bhagvan to write his famous *Upanishad*-poem, the Gita

The analogy of the chariot is, as such, most picturesquely depicted in the Divine Song the Gita. Therein we have the picture of a chariot led by five surging horses with Lord Krishna, the Supreme Intelligence, at the charioteer's box and Arjun, the confused and confounded, sitting in the chariot, as the lord of it. On both sides of the chariot stand the armies of the *Kauravas* and the *Pandavas*, drawn in array ready to strike their total war at the Sign.

It is at these tense moments, just before the actual war is started, that we have the setting for the great Gita. Arjun despired at the questions of rightousness and the call-of-duty, confused in mind and intellect, falls prostrate at the Lord's feet, imploring of Him light and guidance; and the Lord, half turning towards Arjun, holding the reins tight and the five steeds steady, "as though smiling", gives out a summary of the Truth declared in the various *Upanishads*. No wonder then that an artist as Sree Vyas Dev, while trying to express in simpler words the transcendental Truth declarations of the *Upanishads*, has to repeat often *mantras* or parts of *mantras* from this *Upanishad* in the Gita. We have already discussed many instances of such borrowings and we shall see later on again many more similar instances

In the analogy of the chariot, the Self is the master of the chariot, the pure discriminating intellect is the charioteer, the

body of the individual is the chariot, and the reins with which the intellect guides the movements of the body is the mind.

It is also noteworthy that there is a similar comparison in *Swatshwataa Upanishad*-29

इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहु-
 विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान् ।
 आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं
 भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः ॥ ४ ॥

Indriyani Hayanahu-
 Rvishayan Theshu Gocharan
 Athmendraiva-Manoyuktam
 Bhokthetva-Hur-Maneeshinah

(4) The sense, they say, are the horses, and their roads are the sense-objects. The wise call Him the enjoyer (when He is) united with the body, the senses and the mind.

Continuing the analogy the *mantra* here

explains what the horses in the chariot-picture stand for. The senses are the horses. Without the sense-organs such as the ear, the eyes, the nose, the tongue and the skin the body-chariot cannot move. It is a well-known truth observed in modern psychology that a child born without any of the sense-organs is a dead one. We generally observe that a blind man has invariably an extra power of hearing. Rarely we find in life an individual who is both blind and deaf. And still more rare (or indeed, such men are not) who have neither the eyes nor the ears nor the sense of touch. In short, we may have among us an unhappy man who has not one or two sense organs but rarely, indeed, can we have one living among us who has at once, more than two sense organs missing in him.

This is not a strange phenomenon. After all, there is a purpose behind our taking up the bodies and coming here to live this mortal existence. The individual

igo-centres take their individual embodiments and come to live a set of circumstances, during fixed periods of time, to earn the experiences of living that fixed life. The instruments through which we can gain the experiences of the outer world are our five *indriyas*. If our *indriyas* are all shut up, the world outside rolls up into nothingness, as far as we are concerned. For example, in our deep-sleep-state we are not aware of the outer world at all, because, none of our sense organs functions for us during our sleep-state.

If the eyes are not, the forms are not; with our ears surely we know we cannot grasp ideas of forms. So too, with every other sense organ. If the organs were not with us, our birth in this life would have been a mad man's maddening extravagance, purposeless and idle. Lord, the creator, is no mad man. There is a purpose, definite and sure, in each one's arrival here, be it a worm or be he a king. Since,

without the sense organs the purpose of our embodiment is defeated, the Law sees to it that no child is born with none of the sense organs, for, in that case, the child would be defeating the purposes of its Creator.

The *Sruti* here says that the horses that draw the body chariot are the sense-organs. There is indeed, a masterly thoroughness in the inimitable expressions of the Hindu scriptures. Though they are so brief in their style, they never leave any statement half said. When they have discussed the chariot, the rider, the driver and the horses, the picture would not have been complete without the explanation of the road on which the horses are to run. The *Upanishad* says that the sense-horses trot the sense-objects !

The eye can illumine or function only in the realm of form; that is, we can never come to hear with our eyes ! So too, the ears ; they can perceive only sound ;

with the ears we can never come to "see" ! The tongue can walk only the path-of-taste, and the skin, the road-of-touch. On the whole, it means that the sense organs, because of which the body exists, function each only in its own field of objects

The wise, in the stanza, means the sages and saints, who have realised in their life the Total Perfection, which is God-head, and also those who, in declaring their intuitional experiences, have become the authors of the *Upanishads*. They declare that the true entity, in us who seem to experience the joys and sorrows of life is not the Atman, the All-witnessing Intelligence, but the conditioned-Atman. The Supreme Intelligence as conditioned by the body and mind is the ego-centre (*Jiva*), which seems to enjoy and suffer the passing circumstances of this evanescent life, called the *Samsar*. By thus defining the enjoyer in us the *Sruti* is definitely making a

differentiation between the two entities in us, one, the Truth Principle, the non-doer and the non-enjoyer, and the other, the delusion created ego-centre (*Jiva*) which is but a 'reflection' of the Supreme Intelligence in the mental lake

यस्त्वविज्ञानवान् भवत्य-
युक्तेन मनसा सदा ।
तस्येन्द्रियाण्यवश्यानि
दुष्टाश्वा इव सारथेः ॥ ५ ॥

Yasthu-Avigyanavan Bhavathya
Yukthena Mansaa Sada
Thasyandriyanya-Vasyani
Dushtaswaa Eva Sradhehe. -

(5) One who is always of unrestrained mind and devoid of right understanding, his sense-organs become uncontrollable like the vicious horses of a charioteer

Having explained the analogy if the *Sruti* were not to expose her intentions in making the analogy it would have been an

idle indulgence in word-play. In the style of the *Upanishads* brevity is the law, and to use therein even a single alphabet unnecessarily is considered as a great sin. Here, from this *mantra* onwards we have a team of four stanzas which in their contents express the purpose which was in the mind of the *Sruti* when she launched out this analogy.

In this *mantra* an inefficient charioteer allows his reins to be loose and, naturally, the sturdy steeds run wild and mad as they list, dashing the chariot into bits and wrecking the Lord on the road side ! In the language of the analogy we are to understand that if we allow an indiscriminate intellect to let our minds loose, then the *indriyas* (sense organs) running wild among the sense-objects shall wreck the body in sensuous excesses. The implication is that if an individual seeker wants to lead a religious life of perfections and hasten his evolution he has to keep his mind steady with his discriminating intellect, and thus

guide the sense-horses properly in full restraint and perfect control. This is hinted at in the following stanza

यस्तु विज्ञानवान् भवति
 युक्तेन मनसा सदा ।
 तस्येन्द्रियाणि वश्यानि
 सदश्वा इव सारथेः ॥ ६ ॥

Yasthu Vijnanvan Bhavathi
 Yukthena Manasaa Sadaa
 Thasya-Ndriyani Vasyani
 Sadsvaa Eva Saradheh

(6) But of Him who knows, and has a mind always controlled, the senses are always controllable as the good horses of the driver.

Just as an intelligent driver, by the intelligent manipulations of the reins guides the horses along the road which the master wants to ride through, so too an intelligent seeker must, with his pure intellect keep his mind in restraint and

control, and must thus guide his life through the Path of God without allowing the horses to run wild, down the embankments into the muddy fields of reckless pleasures there to break the chariot and end the ride, in a tragic way-side crash "

यस्त्वविज्ञानवान् भवत्य-

मनस्कः सदाऽशुचिः ।

न स तत् पदमाप्नोति

संसारं चाधिगच्छति ॥ ७ ॥

Yasthu-Avignyanavan Bhvatya-

Amnaskah Sada-Asuchih

Na Sa Tat Padamapnothi

Samsaram Chadhigachchathi.

(7) And he who is devoid of proper understanding, thoughtless, and always impure, never attains that goal, and gets into the round of births and deaths.

With reference to what we have already discussed it must be quite clear that the *Śruti's* intentions are to make the seeker

understand that unless he first of all trains himself to live the day-to-day life intelligently following the codes of morality and ethics he shall not stand any chance of succeeding in the life Divine. *Sruti* is never tired of repeating at every stage the all-important fact that spiritual practices cannot produce the total effect of perfection or happiness unless the devotee is ready first of all to learn to live a life of truthfulness and perfect self-control.

In the modern times we are hearing at all hands especially among the educated class, that our sacred religion is empty, hollow and useless ! There are some monstrous, university-educated illiterates, who in their puffed up vanities hurl shameless calumniations against the great religion of Hinduism. This Saddhu had met personally some of them, and when cornered to explain why they condemn Hinduism, some of them at least seem to come out with a real cause; they say that they had

tried *Bhakthi*, *Karma* and other *Yogas* for a long time continuously, but they were not able to enjoy even a trace of the joy and happiness which the *Yogas* promise as a reward ! Such desperados, indeed are, in themselves a sad criticism upon the fall of Hinduism, the Science of Self-perfection.

Even in the Vedic days, when, we all know, the people lived a much more self-controlled life of honesty and goodness, the *Srutis* were insisting with extra-emphasis upon the need and importance of living a life of perfect self-control for every seeker. And, our poor seekers, living the Broadway-life of market-dishonesties, blackmarketing lusts and corruption-madness, if they do some minutes of Japa etc. how can they come to enjoy the blessings of the Absolute Perfection. All his *Kirtans* and *Bhajans*, *Japa* and *Tapa*, temple-going, and Brahmin-feeding, are a waste of time and money, if the devotee is not prepared to keep his mind always under control and

thus ultimately come to control in slow degrees the mad on-rush of the sense organs! This famous fact is hinted at here by the *Sruti*

Those who fail to keep up an intelligent self-control upon their own endless sense-demands, not only do they fail to climb up the ladder of perfection and thus ultimately reach the Supreme God-head (known to us in the scriptures as *Tad-Padam* . . . That State) but, says the *Sruti*, they shall slowly fall in the scale of evolution and thus reach the lower states of animal existence. Man, though he is an animal, is considered as the roof-and-crown-of-beings because of his reasoning capacity. He alone is the one animal who can, at each challenge in life, discriminate between the *Path of Good* and the *Path of Pleasant*, and firmly make a bid always to stick to the *Path of Good*

When Man, of his own accord, refuses the blessings of his powers of discrimination, which his intellect is capable of, he

is deliberately flouting his privileges as Man. And when one has thus, of his own free will, chosen to be an animal, certainly, Nature shall *bless* him with the sorrows and limitations of the animal beings !! Man alone is the glorious heir to the Supreme Joy rising out of the Knowledge achieved, and therefore, of the lived-Perfections.

It is the lot of the animals "to live to eat", suffer meekly the gruesome burdden of voiceless sorrows and live a life of delusions and empty joys. The *Sruti* here clearly points out that not only do men of no Self-control fail to reach the Supreme State of Joy and Peace, but fall back into the sorrow-pit at the very centre of the whirl of birth and death (*Samsaram Chadhi-Gachchathi*).

यस्तु विज्ञानवान् भवति

समनस्कः सदा शुचिः ।

स तु तत् पदमाप्नोति

यस्मात् भूयो न जायते ॥ ८ ॥

Yasthu Vignananam Bhavathi
 Samanaskah Sada Suchih
 Sa Tu Tat Padamapnotih
 Yasmath Bhuvoo Na Jayathac.

(8) But he who is intelligent, ever-pure and with the mind controlled reaches that goal from whence none is born again

In the previous stanza we were told of the tragic end of a man who does not try to control his sense-appetites, but, like an unintelligent animal, ever lives the life of sensuous excesses and volumptious revelries. Had the *Upanishad* left the statement at that, some of us might have come to despair at the feeling that there is no hope of salvation after having born *for once* as a man; for, don't we see around us and is it not our own experience that the sense demands are very powerful and that they are not urges easy to be ignored or controlled? This stanza shows how logical and complete is the style of the

Rishies; and the style represents the men and their head-and-heart personalities to us!!

The stanza under review asserts positively that one who, through steady practice, has come to have a large share of self-control, and therefore is naturally ever-pure, he reaches, through degrees of spiritual growth that State of Perfection, which being Eternal and Immortal, the *Yogi*, who has once reached It never comes back

Yasmath Bhuyoo Na Jayathae (whence none is born again):—A common doubt that often comes to the early *sadhukas* as well as to the uninitiated students is being answered here. During life nobody can ever remain even for a moment without action: and actions have reactions; thus at death there must surely be a fund of reactions *yet to be experienced* by every ego-centre. And, naturally, the *Jivas* are born again into such embodiments and are placed in such circumstances where they can find

the necessary field and the necessary instruments to reap the required reactions. A true devotee, having lived the life of the *Upanishads* and having thus reached the Supreme *Padam* (State) too shall return again to this *Samsaric* whirl of birth and death; why not ?

And if, man were to come back thus to the realm of delusions again, what is the use of his having undergone such an amount of struggle, and having practised so much of self-restraint and self-control ? In what way is he then different from the sensuous, vicious, self-indulgent animal-man ? This doubt generally dabs the enthusiasm of the *sadhaka*. Kind *Sruti* here gives the answer that such a one reaches the Supreme Goal, "from whence none is born again".

The Supreme Goal is the realisation of our indentity with the All-Soul, the *Brahman*. With this true indenfication, the

false indentifications with the mind-intellect equipment, the ego-sense, totally ends. We cannot have the Knowledge of the rope and the serpent at one and the same time; so too, we cannot have the Knowledge of the Self and the false delusory indentifications with matter, called the Ego, which is the *Jiva*. Birth and death belong to the ignorance-created sense of ego; when the ego has once for ever ended in the Knowledge of our Real Nature, all birth and death dreams also end "

विज्ञान सारथिर्यस्तु

मनः प्रग्रहवान् नरः ।

सोऽध्वनः पारमात्रानि

तद् विष्णोः परमं पदम् ॥ ६ ॥

Vigyana Saradhir-Yasthu

Manah Pragrabawan Narah

So-dhwana Parmannothu

Tad Vishnoho Parmam Padam.

(9) The man who has Intelligence for

his charioteer and Mind as (well-controlled) rein.—he attains the end of the journey, that Supreme Place of Vishnu.

Concluding the analogy portion, the *Śruti* states in this stanza that, that individual who has allowed his *Indriyas* to function under the dictatorial charges of his Pure Intellect alone can reach the Supreme Destination. In our ordinary drives, if the driver be a dead-drunken-fool, it is obvious that we will not reach our place of appointment.

In our life ordinarily, we are careless, and, under the instructions of an impure intellect we run amock among the sense objects whipped by the lashing strokes of an uncontrolled mind's vicious urges. Panting and exhausted, weary and fatigued, emaciated and weak, the so called man-of-the-world lives a life of unrest and disappointment, even though he be housed in a palace, clothed in silk and rolling in a

feather bed ! None of the material successes and no amount of sense objects can give such a shattered human personality any taste of the real joy and the Godly peace—which are the birth-rights of a full-grown man.

But, on the other hand, we find a sage or a saint without any of the sense objects about him, housed under some tree, clothed in rags, rolling on stones yet, withal, supremely happy and divinely peaceful. It becomes evident, if we just open our eyes and observe these two scenes, that the real *shanti* is not a product to be concocted from a favourable setting of the sense-objects around us. Contentment and inner joy can gurgle up from the bosom of an individual, only if he has trained his mind to function in a well-disciplined self-control. Unless we bring the play of the mind under strict and continuous supervision of an ever-vigilant intellectual discrimination in us, we shall not, during our life progress steadily

towards our life's goal, That, the Temple of Peace. This Supreme Goal is mentioned here as the Place of Vishnu. It would be absurd if a student of Vedanta were to understand that the Place of Vishnu is the Puranic concept of a *Vaikundha*. For purposes of explaining the Scripture, *Vishnu* is not to be conceived as one of the Trinities, but, here, the meaning is, "the all pervading-*Tattwa*."

इन्द्रियेभ्यः परा ह्यर्था

अर्थेभ्यश्च परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धि-

- बुद्धेरात्मा महान् परः ॥ १० ॥

Indriyebhyah Para Hyartha

Arthebhyascha Param Manah

Manasasthu Para Budhir-

Budheratma Mahan Paraha

(10) Beyond the senses are the sense objects; beyond these objects is the mind; beyond the mind is the intellect and beyond the intellect is the *Great Self*.

This and the following *mantra* together provide the *Sadhaka* with a line of thinking which he could pursue during his deep meditations upon the Immortal and the Eternal Essence which is the core of his existence. Earlier we had already explained that in the language of our philosophical text books, "beyond" or "within" indicate the comparative subtleties of two or more factors; subtleties in such cases being measured by the greater pervasiveness of one factor over the other. The *Sruti* here starts with the grossest manifestation of Truth, and, slowly guiding the student through degrees of greater and greater subtleties, ultimately introduces him into the very realm of the subtlest of the subtle, the Atman, that resides in the holy-of-the-holies in us.

This *mantra* is clearly echoed in the third chapter of the *Gita* in its 46th *Sloka*

1 ,

The meaning of the various portions

of this *mantra*. though clear in themselves, obviously, there is some difficulty in understanding the opening statement that the sense objects are subtler than the sense-organs themselves. 'The modern science explains to us that there is no mechanism conceived of by man in his laboratories which is as subtle as the pure dictaphone provided in our ears or the ready camera adjustments of our eyes, or for that matter the sensitive equipment in our organs of touch or taste. None of the above have ever been beaten even by the best of the discoveries of man, even during this Era of Science! Yet, the *Sruti* dares to declare that "*subtler than the sense organs are the sense objects*". It is natural then that the student reading and pondering over this *mantra* should come to wonder how the "forms" are greater than the "eyes", or the "sounds" greater than the "ears" or the "taste" greater than the "organ of taste".

This portion of the *mantra* is explained by teachers to their disciples in the Himalayan valleys very clearly. For example, this very Sadhu found it difficult to gulp this statement down, and had to approach his master for extra-explanations. Doubts in philosophy have a knack of exhausting the student at their very first appearance, and when the explanations come from a true master, all of a sudden, the student finds himself wondering how the doubts ever arose at all in him when their explanations were so simple and obvious !!

Were it not for the different "forms" available in the world outside we would not have been able to feel or assert that we have "eyes"; if, supposing, the world were to be ever steeped in silence all would have been deaf; for, in such a condition the sense organ "ear" has no justification or proof of its existence. In this sense, the sense-objects are the very cause for the sense-organs

It may be more clear, if we take a modern example from our own political life. The President of the Indian Parliament, or for that matter the very Parliament itself would not have any existence, if the Indian *Janta* were not there! The people of a country is the cause for the State and for the Government of that country. Certainly the total might and power of the State is not to be found in any of the individual Indian; yet, the *Janta* of the country is all the same the cause for the State in that country.

In this sense the sense-objects are the causes for the sense-organs. Since, cause is always subtler than its effects, the *Srutis* is fully justified in explaining to us that “*beyond the sense-organs lie the fields of sense-objects*” such as form, sound, taste, smell and touch.

Beyond the objects is the mind:—The significance is self-evident. Mind is

certainly much more subtle than the causes of sense organs. But for the mind, the sense impulse reported by the sense-organs as they come in contact with the sense-objects would not have been registered and synchronised together to give us the total impression of the objects, as the table, the chair etc

Beyond the mind is the intellect — In our early discussions on the fundamental principles of Vedanta we had discussed the scope and structure of the human mind when we said that the mind is the “receiving-and-despatching-clerk” in the inner secretariate. The mind receives impulses sent in by the five sense-organs and synchronises them together into one ‘file’, and passes it up to the intellect.

The decisiveness of the intellect is that which finally disposes off the ‘file’, there, the impulses received are checked up with the previous experiences of similar impulses, which are stored away in the memory, and,

with reference to and in terms of the past experiences, the present impulse is revalued and correctly classified. The intellect thereupon passes down its judgment, which, in its turn, is, for the necessary execution of orders, pushed back by the mind, to the five sense-organs, who implicitly act as they are required in the outer fields of the sense-objects.

Here, the scheme of the inner Government is so elaborately discussed, only to show the greater importance the intellect has over the mind. The scripture is perfectly justified in making her statement that the intellect is subtler than the mind.

Beyond the intellect is the Great Self:— Naturally so. The Great Self is, what we have so far discussed in our earlier lectures as the Total Mind or the Total Intellect, the (*Hiranyagarbha*). In our false sense of egoism and illusion-created sense of separateness we presume generally that we think our own thoughts, totally independent of the thoughts of others!

We also presume that our thoughts are exclusively our own and nobody need worry about the texture or the quality of our individual secret thoughts ! This is an absurd and false statement worthy to be blabbered only by a thoughtless, uneducated, barbarian ! Nobody can think even a single thought in absolute independence and freedom from the whole.

Let us take an example and try to understand it. Mr. Das returning from his office, takes his tiffin, and lying in his easy chair in his pyjamas, comes to entertain an idea that he must go to the "pictures". He soon comes to feel *that he has a wish to see the "pictures," and that it is his wish.* Now friends, do you accept that this clerk after his day's work resting in his verandah is the sole author of this idea ? Is he not a product of the thoughts and values of his age (his great grand-father would never have thought of such an idea, since there was no cinema in his time), a slave

to the conscious and the unconscious influences that he has been receiving in the society during the week and a victim of the silent murmurings of the innumerable advertisements that he must have seen and the thousand congratulatory statements heard from his friends which applauded this particular "picture" ? And, however intelligent he may be, he would yet shamelessly declare that, "go to the pictures" was his own independent, individual, idea which came to him that evening ?

In fact, none of us can independently feel or think. We, each of us, live every moment of our life influenced by others; and if we be true in our convictions and noble in our values of life we shall be, to that degree, influencing the total.

The Total Intellect is the concept of the God-principle. Here the "intellect" stands for the entire "inner instrument", the *Antakaran*. It must certainly be

obvious to us now that the Total Intellect is certainly subtler than the individual intellect.

महतः परमव्यक्तं

अव्यक्तात् पुरुषः परः ।

पुरुषान्न परं किञ्चित्

सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः ॥ ११ ॥

Mahathah Paramavyaktam

Avyakthath Purushah Parah

Purusha-anna Param Kimchith

Saa Kashtaa Saa Paraa Gathih

(11) Beyond the great (*Mahat*) is the unmanifested (*Avyaktam*) Beyond the *Avyaktam* is the *Purusha*, beyond the *Purusha* there is nothing; that is the end; that is the highest goal.

The Total Intellect described in the previous *mantra* constitutes, as we know, the *Hiranyagarbha*, which is the state of the world as it first emerges out of its very seed-condition, as a sprout. We all know

that in a fig-tree seed we have, in fact, in an unmanifest condition the entire tree itself. Under favourable conditions, through the minute hole in the skin of the seed, water is absorbed and the food contents of the seed bloat out and tear the testa and the tegmen which are the coatings of the seed. The radicle and the plumule, fattening themselves upon the ready food stored away in the cotyledons slowly shoot out through the aperture made in the skin of the seed. At this stage the seed is said to be sprouting.

Similarly, the Supreme Truth, the All-pervading, Pure Existence, Eternally remains in its unsullied State of Perfection. Due to the play of *Maya*, Pure Consciousness starts projecting Itself through various layers of grossness to end ultimately in its manifestation as the *Jagat*. In the analogy of the seed, if the Total Intellect be the condition of the sprout, where manifestation has *just started*

becoming evident, then the condition of the tree in the seed as unmanifest would correspond with the State of *Avyaktha*, stated in the *mantra*. The *Avyaktha* State is the State of the Unmanifest *Jagat*; something like the condition of each of us in our mother's womb; It may be noted here that *Avyaktham*, *Pradhana*, *Moola-prakrithi*, *Avyakrithi* and *Maya* are synonymous terms.

Beyond Avyartham is the Purusha :— Subtler than the State called the Unmanifest is the Supreme, Pure Existence, termed in the *Upanishad*, in this *mantra*, as *Purusha*. This is the subtlest of the subtle factor which is the Supreme Goal of all the manifested world.

In our enquiries into the last two *mantras* we were seeking from the grossest external manifestations of Truth, through layers of greater and greater subtleties, the supreme-most point of purity and subtlety, the Truth. We found in degrees

that the grossest are the sense-organs and beyond them are the sense-objects. Still subtler is the mind. Beyond the mind is the intellect. Subtler than the intellect is the Total Intellect. Yet subtler the Unmanifest, and, herein we conclude by declaring, that subtler than the Unmanifest, the Supreme Goal of our seeking, is the *Purushá*, the Truth. As logic would have, it is possible that in this chain of varying degrees of subtlety we may yet come to enquire what is subtler than the *Purusha*. In this case we may tumble down into the logical absurdity known in *Sanskrit* as *Anavastha Dosham* (Regress Ad Infinitum). To avoid this, and to satisfy fully an enquiring intellect, *Sruti* here clearly explains, "beyond the *Purusha* there is nothing"

It may yet be wondered by the seekers whether this *Purusha-tattwa* be after all the Supreme Truth, by indentifying with which we may reach that State of Supreme

Perfection and Peace. In order to alley all such vague doubts, and to rewind all the loose ends into one cord, the scripture, here in this *mantra*, definitely asserts (*Saa Kashataa*) "that is the end".

येष सर्वेषु भूतेषु
गूढोऽत्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्रया बुद्ध्या
सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥ १२ ॥

Yesha Sarveshu Bhutheshu
Goodho-Thmaa Na Prakasathae
Drisyathae Thwagrya Yaa Budhyaa
Sukshmayaa Sukshmadarsibhih

(12) This *Atman* is hidden in all beings and does not shine forth, but is seen by subtle seers through their sharp and subtle intellect.

Vedantic Self-realization is not a mere experiencing of the true nature of our divinity alone. To re-discover ourselves to be none other than the God is not in itself

a full realization accepted by the *sastras*. No Mahatma's work is perfect unless he could feel a perfect *oneness* with all in his own-Self. If he were to realize himself to be God and all others as mere worms his realisation is faulty and absurd. The pot-space in getting itself rid of its false ideas of identity with the pot shall realize at once its *oneness* with the entire universal space. Similarly, a seeker when, through patient and constant practices, rids himself of his ego and the ego-bound identification with his body, mind and intellect, will realize that the some-total-whole is Truth alone, "which I am, which I am".

In short "*Prathya-guthma-Brahma-ikhya-Gyanam*" (the knowledge of the Oneness of the inner most Self with the Total Self) is the process of the Path of Knowledge. This is amply made self evident in this *mantra*. In the previous *mantra* we had a discussion of the worlds of the sense-organs, the world of the sense-objects, the

world of the mind, the intellect, the Total Mind, and of the Unmanifest; and before the *mantra* concluded its declarations, it also indicated the Supreme-most Factor, the *Purusha*. In this *mantra*, which immediately follows the previous one, we have the discussion of the "secret Self" that lies concealed in "all beings". The idea implied therein is obviously the *oneness* of the "inner" individual Self and the "outer" Total Self.

Hidden in all beings.—Atman the very Self of the individual can never be hidden from us, yet, under the veil of Ignorance and the thick walls of negativities and delusions, the Self seems to be hidden from our ego-centre-instruments of cognitions, feelings and understandings, such as the sense-organs, the mind and the intellect. The Self is only as much hidden from us, because of our delusions and the delusion-created ego, as the rope is hidden from us because of our mental delusions and the

delusion-created serpent !!

Just as, those who can approach the "serpent-in-the-dark" with a peaceful mind, in a spirit of enquiry and self-discovery, alone can rediscover the rope, so too a seeker of Truth, whose mind has calmed down from its agitations for sense-indulgences and who, therefore, can approach the great Mission of Life in a spirit of enquiry and self-discovery, alone can come to discover the *Atma-tattwa*, the Source of all life, as himself !

यच्छेद् वाङ् मनसी प्राज्ञ-

स्तद् यच्छेज्ज्ञान आत्मनि ।

ज्ञानमात्मनि महति नियच्छेत्

तद् यच्छेच्छान्त आत्मनि ॥ १३ ॥

Yechhed Vagh Manasee Pragyna-

Stad Yachchhe-Gyana Atmani

Gyana-Matmani Mahathi Niyachchheth

Tad Yachched-Chachanda Atmani

(13) Let the wise sink his speech into

the mind, the mind into the intellect and the intellect into the Great Atman and the Great Atman into the Peaceful *Atman*.

The Aryan nature is such that it not satisfied by a mere philosophical idea, however poetical and utopian it may be; for, the Aryan is too much of a creature of purpose and practical vision. Unless an idealism is supported by a perfect technique of self-discipline by which the practitioner can *come to live as an experience for himself* all the joys it promises, it is totally rejected and laughed at by the sturdy intellect and courageous mind of the true Aryan-stock "

True to this spirit of the country and its people, Indian philosophy is never a mere text-book of stale and fantastic ideas strung together to form a garland to applaud a passing mood of some tumbling generation! Here, in the *Upanishad*, immediately following an explanation of the

The scriptural text here is to be understood as indicating at once both the organs-of-knowledge and action by the mere mention of one of them, namely the speech (*Vak*). "All the organs-of-action and knowledge have to be brought under perfect control of the mind", is the advice of the *Sruti*.

Thereafter the mind is to be sunk into the intellect, meaning, the mental tossings, doubts, desires, emotions etc. are to be completely brought under the iron grip of the intellect and its powers of discrimination. The process is continued by lifting our identification with our individual intellect and fixing it up with the Grand Total Whole. This again is to be sublimated into its fundamental cause, the State of Sleepless Sleep, the *Thuriya Avastha*, transcending which the seeker in his higher meditations reaches the goal of life, there, to eternally re-cognise himself, in a powerful subjective experience, to be the *Purusha*

Himself.

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत

प्राप्यवरान् निबोधत ।

क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया

दुर्गं पथस्तत् कवयो वदन्ति ॥ १४ ॥

Uthishtatha Jagratha

Prapya Varan Nibodhataa

Kshurasya Dharaa Nisithaa Durathyaya

Durgam Padha-Sthath Kavayo Vadanthi

(14) Arise, awake; having reached the great (teachers), learn (realize that *Atman*). Like the sharp edge of a razor is that path difficult to cross and hard to tread,—thus the wise say.

Upanishads are the declarations of Truth, as experienced by the *Upanishad* Rishies in the white-heat of their living meditations. An individual even when he comes to discover an ordinary Joy or beauty almost goes mad and strives to explain the experience to his fellow men.

Thus, we have the songs of bards in every language, besides the various volumes of literature on every branch of knowledge. Instances are not wanting where scientists have almost gone mad, when they suddenly, during their deep study, discovered for themselves one more secret of Nature. Newton, certainly, could not have felt so much the pain of the apple falling on his nose as the joy of his thoughts over a gravitational force that draws every thing towards the earth ! Archimedes ran naked, directly from his bath-tub, crying "*Eureka*", "*Eureka*" through the streets of the city, when he discovered for the first time how volumes can be measured by measuring the water displaced by material objects !

Similarly, the great Rishies of old in their silent contemplations upon Truth, when they came to realize the Godliness that Eternally is their nature, in their joy and feeling of the Absolute Perfection,

roared forth their joy-calls and victory-trumpets to their generation. Instances are many in the various *Upanishads*, where the Rishies directly call their generation to follow the Path, seeking Truth until each realizes for himself his identity with the God-Head.

Here in the *mantra* under discussion, we have the world-famous Call of the Spiritual Kingdom—the Call of Hope and Glory—to man rotting in his dejections and sorrows. This famous call to man to arise and awake has been adopted by Shri Swami Vivekananda in his Mission's emblem.

“*Arise, awake*”—Oh man rotting in the quagmire of Samsar! Arise! Turn towards the brilliant, sunlight Land of Perfection and walk thee through the Path shone to us by the Rishies. Walk the Path, and reach the glory-summit from where you can experience that your sense of limitations and imperfections, hopes and desires, successes

and failures, loves and hatreds, birth and death were all but a gruesome midsummer's night's dream !!

Mere rising from the bed is not at once a total ending of sleep. It is our agreed experience that although we have arisen from our pillows we are not immediately as alert, and fully awake to the external world as we would be after a time. Certainly, there is a lot of difference between our sudden rising from the bed and our state of full awakening.

Rude shocks in life such as loss of property, sudden bereavements, disappointments in love and such other causes may temporarily make us realize the falsity of the values lived by us in our day-to-day life of competition and selfishness. Man, under these stresses in life, comes to feel the hollowness of life and, for the time being, comes to entertain a seemingly healthy *Vyragya* ! But this is only a passing mood.

In many of us this mood does come at some time or other, but soon it passes off as an impotent impulse. This state of temporary opening of our mind to the hollowness of life as lived by us is here indicated by the word "Arise". At this state the seeker is not fully aware of the very change that has taken place in him. Hence the Rishies cry out: "Awake"; meaning that the one who has under the lash of the circumstances come to accomplish the command, "arise", should try his best to come to a fuller realisation of what has actually happened within him in his personality, and thus fully get himself awakened.

This awakening can be effective only when one, who has "arisen", rushes to the feet of a *real* Guru (who is well-versed in the scriptures and also well-established in the Brahmic consciousness) and learn the *Brahma Vidya*.

Why should we at all have a Guru? This is often asked by almost all the modern

edutated class of people But they at once forget that when even as mechanical an art as typewriting cannot be mastered without an instructor who can persue the Path of Self-Realization without the help of a Master?

Again, the Path is very difficult. “*like the sharp edge of a razor is that Path*” Anybody who has at least made even a sportive attempt to live always the *Path of Good* shall realize how slippery and narrow is the Path !!! A life dedicated to perfect self-control and self-discipline, a life of full awareness and all discrimination is no easy life A *Sadhu* sitting under a tree may be an “Idler” to a city-bread Insurance agent or a jungle wood-cutter!! But if only the Insurance agent would try to do what the *Sadhu* is doing even for an hour !!

The statement that the Path is as risky as the knife edge is made by the *Sruti* only to emphasise the importance in

strictly following the Path, under *all conditions and circumstances*. This should not in any sense of the term be mis-construed that the Path is impossibly difficult; nothing of that sort is it to a true seeker.

Lord Death could claim the statement as His own. But he does not, and, in this, he is not showing off any sense of assumed modesty. In Vedānta, we do not accept any statement made by anybody "as his own experience" with any credulity!! Imaginations and fancied ideas have no place in Vedānta. We accept only words and statements that have come to us by a long line of teacher-disciple descendents. Hence Lord Death is quoting here the Wise as having had made this statement in the ancient days! (*Kavayoo Vadanthi*).

According to the Rishies any civilization or culture which precludes the experience and the recognition of the Divinity in man is an *existence* in continuous sleep and a *progress* through tumbling falls!!

अशब्दमस्पर्शमरूपमव्ययम्

तथाऽरसं नित्यमगन्धवञ्च यत् ।

अनाद्यनन्तं महतः परं ध्रुवं

निचाय्य तन्मृत्युमुखात् प्रमुच्यते ॥ १५ ॥

Asabda-Masparsha-Marooopa-Mavyayam

Tadha-Arasam-Nithya-Magndhava-Ncha Yath

Anadhyanantham Mahathah Param Dhruvam

Nichayya Tan-Mrithyumukhath Pramuchyathae.

(15) He, who has known that which is without sound, without touch, without form, without decay, without taste, eternal, without smell, without beginning, without end, beyond the *Mahat* (great) and unchanging, is freed from the jaws of death.

You must be remembering that the burning question which Nachiketas submitted to his master, Lord Death, was whether there was really an existence after death or not. Lord Death refuses to give him a direct reply in a parliamentary-yes-or-no-style, and thus sceptics and low

atheists, not having the intellectual capacity to understand the correct import of the very method of religion and religious teachings, quote such instances and cry that even the greatest of Gurus have only succeeded in evading the questions directly asked by the ignorant seekers. But scientifically speaking, the question, though seemingly sincere and correct, is a philosophical absurdity, and no true thinker can afford to answer such a wrong question in terms of a completely scientific language. If supposing Lord Death were to say that there was no life after death he would certainly be telling a lie, since, Pure Existence must eternally exist. If on the other hand Lord Death were to answer that there was existence after death, again, he would be false; he would be wrong scientifically, for, in the Realm of Pure Existence there could be no trace of *non-existence*, and the idea of existence can maintain itself only with reference to its opposite, namely non-existence. It was

under a similar awkward situation that Lord Buddha also had to keep mum when his disciples pointedly asked him if there was a God or not.

Though Lord Death is not directly answering his disciple the answer is there in his words for the wise and intelligent to grasp intuitively.

The *mantra* under discussion explains the true Nature of the Self in its Absolute State of Perfection, in terms of a language conceived of for explaining things and for narrating experiences which are finite and limited. Our concept of the world and the things in it is as we have already seen, only through the five small peep-holes in our body constituted by our five sense-organs. What we cognize or experience in our life is explained in terms of the sounds heard, the touches felt, the forms seen, the tastes enjoyed or the smells experienced. /

In short, the world constituted of matter is cognized, and the cognition is expressed in terms of the properties of matter. In her attempt to discuss and explain the Abode of the Spirit *Sruti* had to point out to us the distant horizon of the world-of-matter and explain to us, "there, in the yonder lies the field of Pure Consciousness, the Kingdom of the Spirit".

At the boundaries of the finite world-of-matter all languages stop; beyond them, only the Language of the Soul, silent meditation, is available for the spirit to converse with the spirit. Naturally, *Sruti* finds no other convenient and scientific style of language to explain the inexplicable, except by employing a language of repeated negations

Thus, in this *mantra* we have the *Atman* explained to us in all its transcendental glory in the language of negation as *Asabda* (without sound), *Asparsa* (without touch), *Arupa* (without form), *Arasa* (without

taste) and *Agandha* (without smell). This is the only method available for the Science of Truth to explain Itself in terms of a finite language.

In negating the properties of matter such as sound, touch, form, taste and smell, the *Sruti* is indicating that our sense-organs cannot perceive Truth as such.

Nithyam (eternal) :—Because Truth is beyond the comprehension of the sense-organs it is also eternal, for, a pot or a table or a chair, perceivable by the *Indriyas* is finite. Thus, in negating for our sense-organs any play in the world of Truth *Sruti* has already indicated Its eternal nature too

Anadyanantham (without beginning and without end) :—Not satisfied with the mere indication of the eternal nature of the Soul by the very language of negation employed, *Sruti* has already expressed in the first line of the *mantra* that Truth is

eternal (*Nityam*) And in her anxiety to drive home the idea into the mind of the seekers, she almost commits a sin of repetition when she says that Truth is without beginning and without end When we digest this epithet in a true understanding of the science of *Brahma Vidya* we shall find that it, without being a mere repetition, is a well-chosen word to give us a clear idea of everything suggested by it

That which has an end, meaning, a perishable thing, perishes only to lose its present state of existence, and in thus perishing it can only go back into the condition of its cause. If a clay pot perishes it can only become mud which is the cause from which it had risen. If a seed ends it can only be to become a tree, which is its immediate cause, or it can decay to become the very elements from which it came. When we say that Mr. Gupta has died or is no more, we only mean that the elements which, for a time,

constituted themselves into the "form" of Mr. Gupta are no longer keeping that "form" but have merged with the dust. In the language of physics, "nothing is lost when a candle burns" !

Thus, all finite things end only to go back to the cause from which they had been born. In denying an end to Truth, *Śruti* is indicating to us that Truth is the Cause of all causes and that it has no cause into which it can go back; this also means that Truth as such is not the modification of anything. It is the Ultimate Hence it is also beginningless.

Dhruvam (immutable, changeless) :—
From the above it must be quite clear how Pure Consciousness, the Self, in his transcendental nature is ever changeless.

If such be the plane of Truth, beyond the cognition of the sense-organs, the mind and the intellect, even if it be

changeless, eternal, beyond the *Hiranyagarbha* and beginningless and endless, why should a seeker after all seek to establish his identity with it ? Is it not more sure, certain, and profitable to reach the day-to-day market-places to play the sorrowful game of life, and there to strive and struggle, to sweat and toil, to sob and sigh, in between the flashes of, laughter and mirth, smile and dance, song and play ?

Srutu is here explaining why man should seek and ultimately fulfil himself in establishing his true identity with this Supreme State of Perfection. He who has known the State of Eternal Bliss is freed from the jaws of death. There is no doubt, indeed, that no other fear in life is so common to all as the *dread for death*. Here the word 'death' is to be understood not in its limited aspect of men and beings breathing their last leaving their forms on the surface of the globe to perish in decay.

'Death' is used here in its widest scope bringing within its embrace all the finiteness in the world of matter.

Thus, the *mantra* explains to the deluded man that he who can seek constantly and ultimately succeed in establishing his identity with this State of Perfection, to him there is no more a world of finite sense impulses to wreck his perfect joys by bringing their stormy sorrows and tumultuous despairs into his bosom.

Nichayya (having known):—This does not mean 'to know Truth' in the sense we know a table or a chair. When the *mantra* has in its very first line negated the sense-organs any play in the World of Truth it has negated in effect there the play of the mind and the intellect also. Here the term "*having known*" only means "experiencing subjectively". Intuitive experience alone is the mode of 'knowing' the Truth Absolute.

नचिकेतमुपाख्यानं

मृत्युप्रोक्तं सनातनम् ।

उक्त्वा श्रुत्वा च मेधावी

ब्रह्मलोके महीयते ॥ १६ ॥

Nachiketa-Mupakhyanam

Mrithyu-Proktaṁ Sanathanam

Ukṭhwa Śruthwa Cha Medhāvee

Brahmalokaḥ Mahīyathae

(16) The intelligent one having heard and repeated this ancient story of Nachiketas told by Death, is glorified in the world of *Brahman*

In the 16th and 17th *mantras* with which the first chapter of *Kathopanishad* ends we have a brief statement glorifying the very *Upanishad*. Such statements of eulogy are very frequent in the style of the scriptures and according to Shri Shankara these statements are often pronounced with a view to encouraging the seekers to study and follow the Path.

It is noteworthy that Shri Shankaracharya in his commentary points out that *Brahmaloka* can have two interpretations: it can be either "the world of the creator", meaning the *Hiranyagarbha* State (*Brahmni Loka*), or it can be the world of the Self-effulgent Brahman (*Brahmrupi Loka*, where *Loka* means *Prakasaropa*). In short, if an intelligent one, who has a large share of retentive capacity and has memorised the first three *vallies* of this *Upanishad*, were to repeat these *mantras* often in the presence of others, and thus contribute to the dissemination of them, he shall come to enjoy the transcendental joys of the *Brahma Loka*. And if we were to accept the other interpretation of Shri Shankara we shall have to twist a lot the meaning of the words 'hears' and 'repeats'. In this case, "hearing" and "repeating" would mean *hearing* the Truth from a perfect Master and *repeating* it through one's own reflections and meditations until at last one becomes a full *Gyani*. Then

each great soul shall come to enjoy this
Brhman-jñāna for, "the knower of
 Brahman becomes Brahman", is a famous
 scriptural injunction.

यत्तं परमं गुणं

श्रावयेत् ब्रह्मसंघटि ।

प्रयतः श्राद्धकाले वा

तदानन्त्याय कल्पते

तदानन्त्याय कल्पत इति ॥ १७ ॥

(इति प्रथमेऽध्याये तृतीयाऽध्यायः)

Yathā . . . Prathamam Gāṇam

Śraṇvayet Brahmasaṅghaṭi

Prayataḥ Śrāddhakāle Vā

Tadanantyaaya Kalpate

Tadanantyaaya Kalpate Iti

(Ithi Prathama Adhyāya Tṛtīyā Vāli)

(17) Whoever with devotion recites
 before an assembly of Brahmans or at the
 time of *Śraddha* of forefathers, this highest
 secret, obtains thereby immortality, ob-
 tains immortality.

Thus ends the first chapter, the third section of KATHOPANISHAD.

Anandyaya Kalpathe (obtains immortality) — This statement should not be confused by the student of Vedanta to mean what it directly says. Immortality cannot be gained by merely reading some text books, however great they may be in the presence of any assembly. Knowledge alone is the cure for ignorance; light alone can end darkness. The vital experience lived through *samadhi* that one is, in one's real *Svaroopā*, of the nature of the Self, alone can end the delusion-created ego-centric false identifications. It is only with the end of the ego, can we end the dream-sorrows of *samsar* and end for ever the endless whirl of births and deaths. Here immortality means only *relative* immortality which is the lot of the denizens of the heavens. Compared with the quick visitations of death in the plane of the mortal the long periods of life extending

over thousands of years lived and enjoyed by the enjoyers of heaven, the heavenly life can be favourably expressed as immortal.

With this glorification of *Brahma Vidya* the first half of the *Upanishad* ends. It is the style of the *Upanishads* to repeat the last portion of the last *mantra* in each chapter to indicate the end of the chapter. Thus we have here a repetition of the last two phrases to indicate the close of the chapter.

Thus in this chapter we have an elaborate scene of a fit student for Vedanta, Nachiketas, approaching a great and perfect Master of *Brahma Vidya*, Lord Death, with a burning doubt for ellucidation. The chapter also contains some crisp statements in which the scriptural answer to the transcendental question has been very briefly hinted at, with, as it were, many dots-and-dashes in between. The next

chapter, constituting in itself the entire second part of the *Upanishad* gives us in detail the philosophical expositions on the Nature of the Self

ॐ सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु ।
 सह वीर्यं करवावहै । तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु ।
 मा विद्विषावहै ॥

ॐ शान्तिः । शान्तिः । शान्तिः ॥

Om Saha Navavathu Saha Now Bhunakthu
 Saha Veeryamkaravavahai Thejaswinavadheetha
 masthu. Maa Vidwishavahaihi

[Om Shanthihi ! Shanthihi !! Shanthihi !!!]

Let Him protect us both. May He Bless us with the Bliss of Knowledge Let us exert together. May what we study be well studied. May we not hate (quarrel with each other).

OM PEACE !! PEACE !! PEACE !!

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

CHAPTER 2.

चतुर्थी वल्ली

SECTION (IV)

नारायणो नाम नरो नराणाम्
 प्रसिद्धचोरः कथितः पृथिव्याम् ।
 अनेक जन्मार्जितपापसञ्चय
 हरत्यशेषं स्मरता सदैव ॥

Narayano Nama Naro Naranam
 Prasidhachora Kadhithah Prithivyam
 Aneka-janmārjitha-papa-sanchayam
 Harathva-resham-Smaratham Sadaiwa

The individual, Narayana, is notorious among the world of men as a Thief ! Just remember Him; and He reaches stealthily to steal away all the sins lying accumulated during several births in man's bosom !!

स्वकर्मफलनिर्दिष्टां यां यां योनिं ब्रजाम्यहम् ।
 तस्या तस्यां हृषीकेश ! त्वयि भक्तिर्दृढास्तु मे ॥

Swakarma-phala-nirdishtam
 Yam Yam Yonim Vrajamyaham
 Thasyam Thasyam Hrishikesha
 Twavi Bhakthi-dhridha-sthu mae.

Whatever wombs I may enter, impelled by the effects of my actions, in all those births, O Hrishikesha, may I have firm devotion to thee.

(Pandava Githa)

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

CHAPTER 2

चतुर्थी वक्षी

Section (iv)

एवमत्र त्वानि न्यनुमान स्वयम्भु-

न्मन्मात् एवम् पश्यति नान्तरान्मन ।

अथिह धारः प्रत्यवान्मानमेल-

दायुनचचुरभृतन्वामन्जन ॥ १ ॥

(1) The Supreme Being (*Brahman*) created the senses with out-going tendencies therefore man beholds the external universe and not the internal Self (*Atman*). But some wise man with eyes averted (with his senses turned away) from sensual objects, desirous of Immortality, sees the *Atman* within.

Being the opening stanza of the second part of this *Upanishad* we find herein not only an explanation of the sorrows and limitations of the *Samsaric* world, but also hints on the path trodden by the wise in getting out of this world-of-tears

No religion in the world is without its conception of an All-powerful Controller and Director in all forms of life, who is Himself the creator. This God-principle is conceived of by all known prophets and sages as Self-born. The *Srutis* here is repeating this universal concept of God.

God, the creator, has created the sense organs with a powerful tendency to go outward into the lusty fields of their own individual sense-objects. Our ears could detect and listen to even the whispering songs of some distant bird chirping on a branch of a tree, through the din and roar of tramways and trucks even in the busiest market centre! Our eyes could detect

introvertedness nor the required amount of moral courage, intellectual conviction, mental heroism, psychological guts and spiritual nerve to dam the outward flow of his *indriyas* and thus send the stream of attention in him back again to its very source, the *Atman*. Indeed, such full blown men are rare in any generation

It is evident how Lord Death has in this beautiful stanza summarised the causes for the decease of death and also prescribes the specific for its remedy. No wonder then if there be no other stanza in all our scriptures which is so often quoted from platforms, from pulpits, in courts and in temples

पराचः कामाननुयन्ति बाला-

स्ते मृत्योर्यन्ति विततस्य पाशम् ।

अथ धीरा अमृतत्वं विदित्वा

ध्रुवमध्रुवेष्विह न प्रार्थयन्ते ॥ २ ॥

Parabhakti Kamamuvanthu Balla-

Sthae Mrithyovanthu Vitathasva Passam

Adha Dheeraa Amritatwam Vidittwaan

Dhruva-Madhruveshuvaha Na Prarthavanthae

(2) The ignorant (child like) pursue the external pleasures (and so) they fall into the snares of the wide-spread death. But the wise do not desire (anything) in this world having known what is eternally immortal, in the midst of all non-eternals.

The forgetfulness of our real divine nature is Ignorance. This Ignorance (*Avidya*) manifests itself in the mental plane as desires. Prompted by these desires the mind whips the sense-organs to run their errands in the world of their objects which together are called by us as the *Karmas* or the actions. It is the "Ignorance" in the Plane of the Spirit that gets transformed into "desires" in the mental plane, which itself is again expressed as "actions" in the outer world-of-objects. Ignorance, desire and action these three are technically

termed in Vedanta as the knots of the Heart (*Hridya-grandhi*). It is this set of knots that causes the actions and man, in order to reap the results of his actions is compelled to take various new forms and independent lives in varied circumstances of uncertain joys and endless sorrows

In these two *mantras* we have a clear indication of the two great obstacles that stand in our way to realization of the Self. (1) the natural tendency of the sense-organs to run outward eloping with the entire wealth of attention that man is capable of and (2) the desire for enjoyments of the objects of this world and the next.

The majority belong to this type of existence. They are, viewed from the highest standards of spiritual perfection, mere children in their growth and evolution. They fail to recognize the possibility of an existence greater in scope and diviner in contents where the sense-organs stop their ambling into the pits-of-sorrow, where

they generally revel in an ordinary man living his day-to-day delusions. Indeed, it is only too true when the *Sruties* classify such men as mere children.

Haunted by desires and goaded by the mind, the sense-organs vainly trot the paths of their objects, seeking for a perfect joy which is continuous and unbroken. Man can be satisfied only with the eternal. Finiteness always despoises man. Seeking the infinite, in our ignorance, we exhaust ourselves among the sense-objects. Tired and weary, fatigued and exhausted with the futile hunt, each of us falls prostrate soon to breath our last! Hence, *Sruti* declares that such childish men who have not come to an adult's discrimination, will fall ultimately into the fruits of delusions, the wide spread snares of death (finiteness.)

Against these men of childhood, *Sruti* contrasts the wise men who live a life of sleepless discrimination and Knowledge. The wise maintain a vigilant discrimination

between the Real and the unreal, the True and the false. They naturally escape from the suicidal urges of a deluded mind. They do not covet the unstable, the perishable, the finite sense-objects, for, they want nothing but the Immortal and the Infinite.

Since the inner enemies are the ignorance, desire and action, the wise through an intelligent control of their actions earn for themselves a state of desirelessness, and since desires are manifestations of the deep-seated Ignorance, in the state of desirelessness there is naturally an end of all ignorance. When ignorance is ended, desire and action which are but the same ignorance in different forms are also ended. With the end of ignorance, Knowledge comes to shine forth. *Muṣya* is ended in *gyan*. And such *gyanis* are here termed as the wise. They naturally would never yearn for the fleeting sense-objects of the world as any ordinary deluded *amsarin*.

येन रूपं रसं गन्धं
 शब्दान् स्पर्शांश्च मैथुनान् ।
 एतेनैव विजानाति
 किमत्र परिशिष्यते ॥
 एतद् वै तत् ॥ ३ ॥

Yena Roopam Rasam Gandham
 Sabdan Sprasam Cha Maidhunan
 Yetheneva Vijanathi
 Kimatra Parisishyathae
 Yetat Vai Tath.

(3) That Atman by which man cognizes form, taste, smell, sounds and the sexual Joys . . . what is there unknowable to that *Atman* in this world ? This is verily that (*Atman* thou hast wanted to know).

This *mantra* must be quite clear to those of you who had been following clearly our discussions upon the *Kenopanishad*. In fact this *mantra* is a summary of the entire line of arguments raised in *Kenopanishad* and the conclusions reached therein

We found in *Kenopanishad* that the instrument, eye, in itself is not competent to cognize the external objects. If the eyes were to see of their own accord then if I were to pluck my eyes and place them on the table they should be able to continue seeing things by themselves; this we know is absurd. Again, a dead man whose eye balls are in tact, even though he be staring on with open eyes we from our practical knowledge of life know for certain that the open eyes of the dead see nothing. From the above it is amply clear that the human eye is only an instrument to see and that it is to be used by a Seer within.

For a close analogy we shall take the case of telescope in use. A telescope by itself can observe no movement of the planets? It is the observer behind the eye-piece of the telescope that watches the heavens through the instrument. Similarly, the human organs-of-knowledge are only

instruments through which smell, sound, taste, form and touch impulses can be received by an intelligent entity that rules the within and makes use of these five instruments

That *power* within each of us, that is the seer behind our eyes, the listener behind our ears, the smeller behind the nose, the taster in the tongue, and the feeler in the skin is the Soul of man, the *Atman* the Self.

This conclusion already arrived at in the previous *Upanishad*, is now inimitably summarised in this *mantra* by Lord Death, when he says, "that is *Atman* by which man cognizes form, taste smell, sounds and sexual Joys".

Manthunam (sense enjoyments) —The use of the word in its plural must necessarily give us the hint that it is not the sexual pleasure alone that is meant but it covers up all enjoyments that we receive from the external world through our instruments of sense-knowledge

Atman being thus the vital intelligence that presides over all the sense instruments, since all our knowledge regarding the world of objects is only through the reports of these five great agents, it is quite appropriate to state that there is nothing unknowable for that *Atman* in this world. Again we shall find, later on in the same *Upanishad*, that the Supreme Reality is by nature Knowledge Absolute.

We may here conveniently remember that the eager seeker in Nachiketas reached the doors of his preceptor, Lord Death, raising a question or doubt as to what is that which is beyond *Dharma* and *Adharma*, beyond the cause and effect and beyond the past and the future. That question is being now directly answered. The Life Centre in us that controls and directs all our physical mental and intellectual activities is the Divine Spark of Truth the Self. It being Eternal and Infinite in Its nature It must necessarily

be beyond the comprehension of language to define It as such. So then conforming Himself to the method-of-the-*Upanishads* Lord Death, through the activities of the dead inert matter envelopments around us is pointing out to a vital and dynamic Presence of Divinity which is in us. Thereafter He explains to Nechiketas that *"this is verily that"*.

In our ordinary life we indicate objects with the pronouns "this" and "that", when one is nearer to us than the other; the nearer one is always indicated by the pronoun "this". When we say "that" chair and "this" pen, it clearly shows that the chair is far away and the pen is nearer to us. Again, the pen becomes farther removed from us when it is compared with our own shirt: thus we say "that" pen and "this" shirt. Similarly we may use expressions as "that" body and "this" mind; "that" mind and "this" intellect etc. within ourselves, when we compare

our own body with our own mind, and our own mind with our own intellect. Naturally, it becomes evident that the Self, which is the core of ourselves, being the most intimate part in us, is rightly indicated by the term "this".

Here the *Upanishad* says, "*this is that*"; meaning the individual-Self is the Supreme Self. Besides this Vedantic interpretation of the *oneness* of the individual-Self and the Total Self we may here, accepting the dramatic background of the *Upanishad*, explain the passage as "that is the *Atman* thou hast wanted to know".

स्वप्नान्तं जागरितान्तं

चोभौ येनानुपश्यति ।

महान्तं विभुमात्मानं

मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥ ४ ॥

Swapnandam Jagrithantham

Chobhau Yenanutshathi

Mahantham Vibhu-Matmanam

Mattwa Dheero Na Shochathi

(4) The wise, when he knows *that* by which he perceives all objects in dream or in waking is the great omnipresent *Atman*, grieves no more

Here Lord Death is slightly elaborating upon the greatest significance and the practical application in life of the Knowledge of *Atman* in us. In these days of scepticism and lusty madness for profits and material hoardings, the educated class of Hindus all over the country fan-faronade. "of what use is this wonderful Knowledge of *Atman* which the Vedanta preaches ? Can it set us on our progress ? Can it cure the food scarcity in the country or bring about universal peace and joy ?

Though one is tempted to curse this generation for its un-intelligent approach to religion we must at once admit that there was, probably, never in the history of the world a generation born so sensitive-

as ours, and so sincerely seeking to establish communal peace and universal brotherhood as ourselves

Here, in the Stanza, we have a sufficiently broad hint as to the mental state, the physical condition and the intellectual attitude of a seeker who has come to grasp this true great Knowledge and fix his own identity with the Real Factor, Pure Consciousness, that lies in him

We already found in the previous *mantra* that the world of the waking state, experienced through our five senses-of-knowledge is made possible only because of the Vital Intelligence, the Life Force, that presides in our body.

If life were not in any particular body, however great and noble that *Mahatma* might have been, however intelligent the Scientist however emotional the poet however great a genius the painter none of them would any more function when once

the life had ceased to preside over the body ! Thus, we have already found out that the intelligent entity, the *Atman*, is the illuminator of our awareness of the waking-state-world during the periods of our wakeful existence

There could be none who had not yet experienced what a dream is. Now, supposing, you take up a book in hand; how do you read it ? Is not the presence of some light necessary for the illumination of the letters and words in the book, so that you may read ? Supposing it were night you might read in the moonlight, in the dark fortnight you may again read in the star light; in a cloudy starless pitch darkness you may bring the light of fire to light up the letters. In short, without some sort of light we cannot see objects Yet, we all 'see' our daily dreams. The dream-world certainly exists only within ourselves; and since we 'see' them, and they are objects, we surely must

need some sort of a light to illumine for us the inner objects in our mental region Lord Death explains that the dream-world is also illumined for us by the Light of the same Divine Intelligence that presides in us as our Real Nature.

One and the same Consciousness illumines for us not only the world of our waking-state but it also lits up for us the experiences of our dream-state

The goal of life, the highest achievement of man is to get himself completely detached from his false identifications with his body, mind and intellect, and come to rediscover himself to be nothing other than that Divine Spark which is the director and controller of all the activities manifested in Its outer envelopments !

Mahantham Vibhum (Great, Omnipresent) :—In the final experience of God-consciousness the perfected one establishes his identity with his soul and thereby

at once realises his own nature as great and omnipresent: for, we have already found that the individual-Self is the Supreme Self.

Having realised this Factor, this Truth, the realised saint grieves no more (*Na Sochithi*) Sense of limitation is the mother of desires in the human heart, desires raise the storm clouds of whistling thoughts to shriek through a noisy bosom, and drives the sense-organs to gallop out into the muddy mesh work of sense-objects In the hustle and tussle to achieve a satisfaction in each of our desires we strive and struggle and in the end find ourselves in a vale of tears ? Even when the desires are fulfilled we, alas !, discover that the joy of success expected by us to enjoy is not there !! When the desires are not fulfilled, in tearful disappointments, men grieve and sigh, to make their life a burning avenue of wretchedness. Thus, a desire ultimately gives us nothing but sorrows whether they

are fulfilled or not.

Desire we found can rise only when there is a sense of imperfection in us. Soon after a full dinner, at least for some time, even the worst of gluttons will not desire for something to eat; for the time being, there is no lack of food with him. Soon after a couple of hours he *may* desire for some light tiffin ! Here he has started feeling a sense of incompleteness, hence the desire

When a perfected human being who has ended all his mis-understandings about himself and has come to the Knowledge that he is the Supreme Awareness in himself, he, in his Absolute sense of Perfection, shall desire no more for anything that the world of the sense objects can give. Such a perfected one is a God-man upon the earth. This is the Goal pointed out by the greatest of all religions known to man, Hinduism. The Religion of *Vedanta*

calls upon man to rediscover himself to be nothing short of God Himself. And when a mortal has fully realised and come to live continuously the God-consciousness, to him, certainly, no sorrow can approach.

If there be but a generation of such Supermen, will it not most satisfactorily solve all our problems : political, economic, cultural and religious ? In fact even when a people has just begun to live the Life of the Spirit all the above mentioned problems of life will recede as though at the waving of a magic wand " Is there anything then more practical than the Religion of Vedanta ?

य इमं मध्वदं वेद

आत्मानं जीवमन्तिकात् ।

ईशानं भूतभव्यस्य

न ततो विजुगुप्सते ॥

एतद् वै तत् ॥ ५ ॥

Ya Emam Madhwadam Veda
 Atmanam Jeevamanthikath
 Isanam Bhoothabhavyasya
 Na Tatho Vijugupsatae
 Yetat Vaa Tath

(5) He who knows this *Atman*, the enjoyer of honey, the sustainer of life and the lord of the past and the future, as very near. . . he fears no more thereafter. This is verily that

Not only does such a perfected one go beyond the source of sobs and tears, but shall, says this *Mantra*, reach the Domain of Fearlessness

Madhvanādam (the enjoyer of honey):—Honey here stands for the good fruits of meritorious acts performed by the ego-centric *Jnaṣ*. The *Atman*, Pure Consciousness, is said to be here the eater of honey, meaning that He is the enjoyer of all the good fortunes and good luck that accrue to one as a result of noble acts of

kindness, mercy and love, performed in earlier states of existence

This statement, in fact, if understood literally, would go against the grains of the very philosophy of Vedanta, as *Atman* is neither an enjoyer nor a doer. In case we accept the *Atman* to be an enjoyer, in Pure Consciousness which is One-without-a-second, how can there be the 'enjoyed' and the 'enjoying' separate from the Eternal Enjoyer?

Atman is the Intelligence that illumines for us both the acts of commissions and omissions, meritorious or otherwise. It is again the Light Principle that illumines for us both our joys and sorrows. The sun may illumine equally a scene of murder at one place and a scene of a great *Yagna* at another place; but the sun never gets defiled by the blood nor purified by the *mantras*. Similarly, the *Atma-Chaitanya*, is only a Witnessing Light of Pure

Intelligence lending its consciousness to all awareful acts committed by the ego-centric vainful *Jna*, during its self-forgetful delusory transactions in life.

यः पूर्वं तपसो जात-
 मद्भ्यः पूर्वमजायत ।
 गुहां प्रविश्य तिष्ठन्तं
 यो भूतेभिर्व्यपश्यत ॥
 एतद् वै तत् ॥ ६ ॥

Ya Poorvam Thapaso Jata-
 Madbhyaah Poorvama-jayata
 Guham Pravisyathishtantham
 Yo Bhoothebhir-Vrapasyatha
 Yetat Vai Tath.

(6) Who beholds him seated within the five elements, him who has born of Tapas (of Brahma Ji), who was created before the waters, who entered the Cave of the Heart and dwells there (he verily sees *Brahman*). This is verily that (*Brahman*, which thou hast asked for).

The theory of creation is a knotty problem in the *Upanishadic* literature. Modern book-grazers and hasty 'students of the *Upanishads* come to the fantastic conclusion that intuitive understanding is not true, since these sacred books have self-contradicting theories to explain the how and whither from of the world's creation. No two *Upanishads* concur among themselves as regards the details of the processes in which creation had taken place. Each *Upanishad* explains to us in its own inimitable style a method and a process; each of them in itself has a charm of its own and can give the student a convincing explanation quite satisfactory, till the same student comes to read and understand a totally different process expounded by another *Upanishad*.

The *Upanishad* Rishies in their firm understanding of the Truth could not take the problem of creation with any seriousness at all. They knew, in their wisdom,

that this manifested world of names and forms is but a delusion created by the human mind. The world has only as much reality as our dreams have. But the *Rishies* knew at once that to the seeker who had approached them, steeped as he was in the impressions created by his own delusions, in his early stages, the world is absolutely real. Each student is to be delicately and softly raised to the higher realms of knowledge from the state in which each of them finds himself at the time of his approach to the *Guru*.

Again, no two students are of the same temperament, culture, attitude or aptitude. The teacher learns the nature of each student through patient and close observations and classifies him according to his temperament.

But here the *Upanishad* calls the *Atman* as an enjoyer of the fruits of the good acts, only in its conditioned aspect. We

have already found that the body-mind-intellect-equipment in itself has no life of its own; it being made up of mere dead matter. It is the spirit in us that lends to these coverings a simulacrum of life

To make this point clearer let us take an example. The glass bulb or the filament has no capacity in itself to illumine objects in a dark room. But when a required quantity of electricity is allowed to flow through the same filament, the bulb gains a special capacity to illumine the objects of the room. In fact electricity as such does not illumine the room; it is the glowing filament in the bulb that gives us the light. Yet, don't we in our transactions say that the room is lit by electricity? It is exactly in a similar way we have here the statement that *Atman* is the enjoyer of the fruits of actions; *Atman* as conditioned by the mind, intellect, and body is actually what is

meant here

One who realises his *Atman* "*hence forward fears no more*". Where is *Raga* (attachment) there *Bhaya* (fear) and *Krodha* (anger) co-exist. When, as we have seen in the last *mantra*, a perfected soul has reached the State of Desirelessness he has no more attachments with any particular objects of the world, and, naturally, there cannot be in him any sense of fear. He has in his true wisdom realised the shadow-nothingness of his dream-body, and so, does not fear even death which to him is only an escape from his own self created body cocoon." He has no attachments even with his body. He is perfectly above all body consciousness. *This verily is that Brahman, which thou hast asked for.*

The great *Rishis* explain to each type, a particular Myth-explanation for the Myth-world! The authors of the *Upanishads* were not in the least serious about their

explanations of a non-existent world. Whatever be the explanation given and processes elaborated, to explain the creation of the world, each master had to lead the student ultimately to a State of Pure Consciousness, viewed from the Absolute Nature of which, the creation had actually never taken place, except in the deluded *Jiva's* own mind "

If we were to explain the fallacy in the snake-in-the-rope we too would adopt an explanation according to the condition of the bitten, and shall modify our own explanations when the victim of the "snake-bite" changes to be another individual of a different temperament and belonging to a different class of culture.

In this *mantra* we have just some hasty cross references to the processes of creation which have been much more elaborately dealt with in other *Upanishads*.

Brahman or the Supreme Reality in the

(*Samashti*) macrocosmic aspect is *Hnanya-garbha* and in the (*Vyasthi*) microcosmic aspect is the *Jna*. He who knows Brahman through both these aspects is a true Knower of Reality.

Adbhya Pooruam (prior to waters):—The *Hnanyagarbha* or the Total Mind was born prior to the “five elements.” Here water stands for all the “five elements”; *Alasha* (space) is a grosser manifestation risen up from the Total Mind.

Tapasah (by penance or of knowledge): There are passages in the different *Upanishads* where the processes of creation are explained, one of them is “the Supreme willed Himself to be many and many came or became”. It is this theory that is echoed in this *mantra*.

In short, the *mantra* says that a seeker finally realises the Supreme Reality which is the Eternal Factor both in the microcosm and in the macrocosm (*Vyasthi* & *Samashti*).

born with the elements. (He who knows *Him* verily knows *Brahman*). This is indeed That

Here the word *Prana* stands for *Hiranyagarbha*; thus the meaning would be, he who is born in the form of *Prana* or as *Hiranyagarbha*

Devatha-mayee (in the form of Gods, the Soul of the Gods) Here *Devata* (Gods) stand for the presiding deities in the sense-organs. The *Pranas* (Vital Airs) are the life-essence in the perception powers of the *Indriyas*

Aditi (one who eats, the eater):—*Hiranyagarbha* is called here as *Aditi* because he is the sole enjoyer of the whole universe, as he is the microcosmic life or the cosmic *Prana* or the cosmic intelligence. All the joys enjoyed by every living form is a joy registered in and lived in the Cosmic Mind or the Total Mind

This is verily that Brahman (which thou hast asked for)

अरण्योर्निहितो जातवेदा

गर्भ इव सुभृतो गर्भिणीभिः ।

दिवे दिव ईद्व्यो जागृवद्भि-

हविष्मद्भिर्मनुष्येभिरग्निः ॥

एतद् वै तत् ॥ ८ ॥

Aranyornihitho Jatavedaa

Garbha Eva Subhritho Garbhineebhāhi

Divae Diva Edyoo Jagrivadbhi-

Rhavishmatbhi-Ramanushyabhi-Raagnih

Yetat Vai Tath.

(8) As the foetus is well-preserved by the pregnant woman, the fire, that is lodged within two pieces of wood, is worshipped daily (both) by men who are 'awake' and those who offer oblations. This is indeed That

The *Brahman* of the *Gyani* and the Fire of the householders are the same in the sense that all worship reaches the same Source-of-all-blessings, the Supreme.

In Vedic sacrifices, fire is lit not from any glowing coal or from any other scientific contrivance, as a cigarette-lighter or a match box. The auspicious fire is generated for installation in sacrifices by rubbing two pieces of wood together. Generally it is done by revolving a cylindrical piece of wood in a wooden cup-hole scooped in another piece of wood. The rod is pressed into the hole by one *Rithwic* and another Brahmin would with a piece of string, wound round the vertical rod, make it revolve continuously in its wooden cup. The wooden piece with which the revolving rod is pressed down is called the *Uttararani* and the lower wooden block is called the *Adhararani*.

In the *Adhararani* near the edge of the cup is placed some cotton. The wood pieces rubbing against each other generate heat by friction and it is sufficient to set fire to the cotton pieces. This fire is then tended in the *Havan-kund*. The fire when

once lit is never allowed to die off but is very carefully nourished and kept ablaze all through the sacrifice until the conclusion of it in the *Pooranahuti* (total oblation). The motherly tenderness, devotion and care with which the *Ritues* preserve the fire is beautifully brought out by comparing it with the foetus preserved in the womb of a pregnant woman. '

The same *Brahman* who is worshipped by sages in the heart through meditation is worshipped by householders as *Agni* (fire) through sacrifices

The seekers worshipped the supreme through meditations upon the significances of OM. The householders worshipped the same Reality that is present in the core of its own manifestation, the Fire. Worship being an act in the gross plane of sense-objects it needs some prop which, for the sage is provided in the symbol OM, and for the householder in his symbol, the Fire. If

the names and forms in OM and Fire are removed, the Pure Existence, which is the Absolute Truth, that forms the foundation for both the props becomes the same. Hence, the *Upanishad* says that the Truth which is worshipped by the sage and the householder is one and the same; and *this is verily that* which thou hast asked for.

यतश्चोदेति सूर्यो

अस्तं यत्र च गच्छति ।

तं देवाः सर्वे अर्पिता-

स्तदु नात्येति कश्चन ॥

एतद् वै तत् ॥ ६ ॥

Yathaschchodethi Suryo-

Astham Yatra Cha Gachchathi

Tham Devaha Sarve Arpitha-

Sthathu Natyathi Kaschchana

Yetat Vai Tath.

(9) And That, from whence the Sun rises, and whither it sets, on That, all the *Devatas* depend and no one goes beyond.

This is indeed That.

All finite things have been observed to have a beginning and an end. Transcient beings are born, and everything that is born must necessarily die out after a period of time. Modern astronomers also have come to the same conclusion that the Sun, the moon and the stars, including this globe of ours, are things born and so they will at different periods disappear into nothingness.

Long before our modern astronomers started their game, in the dim dawn of the history of modern man known today to the European thinkers, the Aryan Masters had built a heaven on the Gangetic plains and helped themselves into a generation of supreme human culture and Godly civilization. Their greatest achievement in thought left to us for study is the Science of all sciences, the *Brahma-Vidya*, as discussed in the *Upanishads*. The *Rishies* of the *Upanishads* here declare that the

vital Truth from which the Sun had risen at the time of its manifestation and the Factor into which it would merge when it withdraws its manifestations, is the State of Pure Existence, which is nothing but a homogeneous mass of Pure Consciousness. Here, the word Sun is a representative noun, indicating in itself the entire world of finite objects.

In that Eternal Absolute, the State of Pure Existence, depend all the *Devas*. The word *Devas* here does not mean the denizens of the heavens, the Godly creatures. It only means the Five Fundamental Elements. They are called *Devas* because they are considered in Vedanta as the presiding deities of the five sense-organs. The modern college-educated children of ignorance in their incorrigible vanities of wisdom (*Vimyan*), might easily laugh at this idea of presiding deities in our sense organs. This kind of blaspheme we hear now-a-days so often that it would be

worthwhile for us to go into the question for a moment and seek if there be any justification for such a belief

Here Chinmaya may confess that he *was* the greatest blasphemer of all such statements in our scriptures ! When ignorance strides forth to act and play the part of wisdom such atrocities must necessarily come to be enacted !! Our European readers need not feel aghast at these strong expressions. These expressions can be exaggerations only to those of us who have forgotten how the Christian world persecuted and killed the greatest thinker and astronomer of the times, when he discovered and declared that the Sun is stationary and that it is the earth that moves a statement against the then Biblical declarations !

Let us try to understand the import of the statement made by the *Upanishad* in the light of the scientific discoveries of our own times. The sense organ, ear, is declared

to be presided over by *Akasa* (space). Our modern scientists will admit that sound can be created and conveyed only in space, if there were no space, no sound would have been generated or conveyed. The world that lies beyond the concept of space known to all of us is the world of sleep · where, certainly sound has no entry. Viewed thus what is wrong if the great masters of the *Upanishad* had declared that the ear is presided over by Space "

In a dark room for all our struggles to 'see', we shall see nothing but darkness. When the room is lit we see the objects. Thus, in the presence of the objects, the eyes cannot see them except when they are blessed by the Principle of Light. In short only in a medium of light can the instrument eye function, except in negligible instances where some animals can see in darkness too " Such being the case what is wrong if the *Rishies* of the *Upanishads*, in the language of their era poetically

describe the instrument eye to be presided over by the visible source of all light, the Sun ?

Thus, when approached in a spirit of sympathetic understanding, research and discovery we shall find, clothed in the frocks of Vedic frill and ancient ribbons there revels eternally the deathless Eve of Truth who is for all times and for all people ! If the modern educated Hindus reach the doors of their own scripture only to laugh at and to ridicule it, let them remember that they are laughing at their own ignorance and lack of understanding.

Thus the *mantra* clearly declares that all the Five Great Elements depend entirely upon the Supreme Self, the Pure Existence. The deities of the five sense-organs, "the Gods", depend upon the Supreme Reality, the Pure Consciousness, as the spokes of a wheel upon the hub of it. But for the central hub we all know for certain that

the different spokes can neither maintain themselves nor can they function effectively their own little part in strengthening the wheel '.

This Truth, which is the substratum for the Fundamental Elements, is that which you have been asking for.

यदेवेह तदमुत्र

यदमुत्र तदन्विह ।

मृत्योः स मृत्युमाप्नोति

य इह नानेव पश्यति ॥ १० ॥

Yadeveha Thadmutra

Yadamutra Tadanvaha

Mrithyo-rsa Mrithu-Mapnothi

Ya Eha Naneva Pasyathi.

(10) What is even here (visible as the world) the same is there (invisible as *Brahman*); and what is there, the same is here. He proceeds from death to death who beholds here difference (between *Brahman* and the world)

All the different waves are but the ocean; the ocean alone is. Whether it be at its head, or at its length or at its tail the real substance behind the serpent-in-the-rope is always the reality of the rope alone. In fact the waves are nothing but the ocean; the serpent is nothing but the rope. The mirage is nothing but the desert !!

In this sense the *mantra* is here kindly explaining to us that in fact there is no difference between the Supreme Reality and the essential Reality behind the world of delusory names and forms. Where there is no Truth there cannot be a manifested world of objects. What we see behind all the seeming delusions is the eternal, all-pervading Truth. The story may be a tragedy, a comedy or a musical extravaganza, but whatever be the theme and quality of the film displayed, the audience can have for themselves a continuous idea of the story only when the play of light and shade is supported by an unchanging

spotless screen; where there is no screen there no story can possibly be depicted

In short, the knower of the Self, after his supreme moment of life, the moment of illumination, cannot visualise the world *without a dynamic awareness* of the Truth Principle that ever supports and governs it. After his gaining the Knowledge, his vision changes, and there afterwards, even the most heinous crime is to that God-man only a manifestation of the All-pervading Self. He neither condemns nor extols any action. To him all actions are false; but at once they are to him, solid reminders of the *Central Truth*.

The uninitiated youth may find this statement rather too thick to swallow down. We shall try to grasp its serious inner import through a vivid example. Don't we find doating fathers glorifying their children as the most ideal kids that had ever come to live on the surface of this

globe, even when they have proved themselves to be urchins of the worst type : mischievous, unruly and uncultured ? If we observe these fathers more minutely we shall find them to be intelligent critics of all the children of others, but they seem to become somehow blind to the weaknesses in their own children ! Similarly, a God-man, having had once the glorious vision of the All-pervading Beauty, attains the Eternal perfection of the Self. Thereafter even in the midst of sorrows and pains he experiences but the Self's joys and bliss !!

To the realised saint, in his transcendental vision, *whatever is here that is there, what is there the same is here* If the statement be yet beyond the grasp of your understanding it is only because the statement relates itself to a stand-point which is too high even for your mind and intellect to soar up in their fat grossness.

After all why should one try to gain this Supreme Vision of Oneness ? Of what benefit is it for the mortal ? These and similar questions might rise up in the mind of the unprepared and the uninitiated.

The *Shuti* kindly answers all such possible doubts in the minds of her students. She says that he who has not achieved this great grand Mission of life and has not come to have a free *Darsan* of the Eternal Presence everywhere and at all times, such a wretch, groveling in the world of plurality, shall fall repeatedly into the whirl of births and death.

The hint is that he who has come to experience the State of Oneness, which is the State of God-hood, shall never more slip back into the endless wheel of samsaric pains and continue the agonising shuttle-race between repeated births and deaths

मनसैवेदमाप्तव्यं

नेह नानास्ति किञ्चन ।

मृत्योः स मृत्युमाप्नोति

य इह नानेव पश्यति ॥ ११ ॥

Mansaaivedamapthavyam

Neha Nanasthi Kinchana

Mrithyo-rsa Mrithyumapnothi

Ya Eha Naneva Pasyathi.

(11) By mind alone could this (*Brahman*) be obtained, then there is no difference here at all. He goes from death to death, who sees any difference here.

As we have seen earlier the Aryans' practical mind is not satisfied by a mere statement of an ideology however wonderful and great it may be. No philosophy is acceptable to the Hindu, unless it also contains "a way of living" by which he can realise the ideals glorified by that philosophy. Satisfying this inner urge essential to the *Aryan* character and national

temperament the *Upanishad* immediately after Her statement of a philosophical truth, as explained in the *previous mantra*, hastens to give Her disciples the Path by which they can realise this Vision of Truth. Mind alone is the vehicle for God-realisation. This statement of the *Śruti* may seem to contradict the previous assertions that the Self is realised on transcending the mind and the intellect

This is no contradiction. When She says that mind is the only vehicle She only means that the mind is to be trained through its controlled and regulated application to minimize its activities to a zero, when it dies off itself. The process of "mind annihilation" is to be achieved not through a *murder* but through a *suicide* ! In fact, however great the master be, and however powerful the scripture be, they cannot bring about the final ending of the mind unless the seeker is ready to end it himself and by his own efforts

Burned alone could thus be obtained :—
 Meditation is the process by which the mind soaring over the summit of spiritual enquiries loses itself into nothingness. Like the mythological bird, Phoenix, which singing its death-song falls down to die in a mass of fire, when out of its own ashes rises up another young one, the seeker's mind also singing the song of meditation, burns itself away in its own Self-lit pyre and out of its ashes rises up a new faculty called intuition, which is the instrument with which the seeker ultimately cognizes the Self. When the mind has thus ended through meditation, and the Self has become fully aware of Itself, *then there is no difference here at all*

For purposes of certainty and emphasis of assertion *Sriuti* is here repeating the dire consequences which one will have to face if one were not smart enough to walk the *Path of Truth* and fully succeed in reaching the Goal of Life in this very birth. "He

shall" promises the *Sruti*, "go from death to death who sees difference here".

अंगुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो

मध्य आत्मनि तिष्ठति ।

ईशानो भूतभव्यस्य

न ततो विजुगुप्सते ॥

एतद् वै तत् ॥ १२ ॥

Angushtamatrah Purusho

Madhya Atmani Thishtathi

Eesano Bhutabhavyasya

Na tatho Vijugupsathae

Yetat Vai Tath.

(12) The person (*Purusha*) of the size of a thumb, resides in the middle of the body, as Lord of the past and the future, henceforward (after knowing HIM) fears no more. This is indeed That.

The *Sruti* declares that a human life fully flowers itself into an adorable success only when the individual comes to rediscover himself to be the all; and this

achievement can be effected only through a control and a perfect sublimation of the mind. Mind has an existence only when it entertains its natural tossings, doubts and emotions. If thoughts do not rise in the mental plane, *that itself* is the "state of no-mind". In order to reach this "state of mindless-ness" the *Yogi* is advised to practise not only a life of self-restraint and self-control, study and retirement, but to bring the newly released energy of his mind into a single-pointed application at a given point for purposes of developing its powers of concentration.

In the case of those who walk the *Path of Bhakti* (devotion), they have the natural prop for meditation and concentration in Name and Form of their beloved Lord. In case of the *Hath-Yogin*, he has the *Kundalini Shakti* (the Serpent Power). For the *Karma-Yogin*, similarly, there is the

constant remembrance of his all dedication to the Lord of the Universe, Sree Narayan. It is only for the rare few who come to tread the rocky uphill *Path of Knowledge* that we find it difficult to provide them with an intellectually feasible prop to fix their mental attention and develop their secret powers of high concentration.

No doubt the *Sruti* texts are in themselves the *Vedantic* students' ultimate prop in his meditation. But before he can launch himself into the philosophical contemplations upon the nature of the Divine Spark, the Self in him, he must have first of all a powerful and high degree of concentration to apply himself. This early training for the development of his powers of concentration is achieved by him through the process now discussed by the *Sruti* in this *mantra*. Kind *Sruti* advises the *Vedantic* students to meditate upon the *Purusha* who dwells in the centre

of the heart and who is of the size of one's own thumb.

To limit the All-pervading Truth to the form of the thumb and to locate It within the limitations of a circumscribed space, as the human heart, is indeed a blaspheme ! But the *Sruti* permits herself even to stoop down to such a crime against Herself, only to provide Her children with something to lean upon and learn to step out their first few steps in walking the Halls of Wisdom.

The second line is a repetition from Section 4 *Mantra* 5 of the same *Upanishad* and for commentary please refer back.

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषो

ज्योतिरिवाधूमकः ।

ईशानो भूतभव्यस्य

स एवाद्य स उ श्वः ॥

एतद् वै तत् ॥ १३ ॥

Angushtamatrah Purusho
 Jyotirivaadhoomakaha
 Eesano Bhoothabhavyasya
 Sa Evadhya Sa U Swa
 Yetat Vai Tat

(13) That person, of the size of a thumb, is like flame without smoke, Lord of the past and future. He alone is even today, and will be verily tomorrow. This is verily That.

That *Purusha* or *Atman* of the size of the thumb who is perceived by the meditator in his heart as light or *Jyoti* exists immutably through all times. past, present and future. He exists in all living beings now, and He will certainly be existing in all forms tomorrow also.

Some *Sadhakas* taking this line very literally start imagining "a thumb like flame" as though burning bright within their bosom and meditate long upon it. Personally, this *Sadhu* had known an individual who had been imagining this

"light" for the past twenty-three years, and who, recently approached the Swami with a very sad and melancholy face to complain of his "spiritual fall", since, he is not having now-a-days the *Darsan* of his *Atman* !!!

Friends, this is only one instance of the desperation of a foolish *Sadhaka* who had come to believe that his imagination-created delusory-flame-dream is his *Atman* ! It is dangerous certainly to try to walk the Path of Knowledge without continuous study of the scriptures and constant *Sat-Sang* with real *Mahatmas*, we mean, not the palm reading, the star-gazing, herb-selling-Mahatmas, that flock now-a-days city-streets of our unhappy land ! Let them be courted by the ignorant multitude that hustle out of the universities of India ! But to a true seeker of Truth and to an intelligent follower of Religion, such *Mahatmas* are mere ochre-clothed-criminals poisoning the very atmosphere of this

sacred Land of the *Rishies*. When we shall have a Government intelligent enough to feed the country better and provide its people with sufficient work we shall have these red-monsters wiped out from our market scene. Till then we must learn to endure what cannot be avoided !!

The thumb-like *Jyotis* recommended by the great *Rishis* is only to provide the meditator with a prop to develop his concentration during the early stages of his practices. The stone idol of Siva is not in itself Shri Prameshwer, similarly, the *Jyotis* is but an idol for the Vedantin to meditate upon during his practices and it is NOT THE ATMAN. If an idol is unfortunately stolen away from a temple it does't mean that God has been stolen away !

When *Sadhaka* has developed his powers of concentration he enters by degrees into the higher stages of meditations

advised by the *Sruti* in the various *Upanishads* and he ultimately comes to realize his own identity with his own *Atman*, the Light-Power-Wisdom-Source within him.

यथोदकं दुर्गे वृष्टम्
 पर्वतेषु विधावति ।
 एवं धर्मान् पृथक् पश्यन्
 तानेवानु विधावति ॥ १४ ॥

Yadhodakam Durgae Vrishtam
 Parvatheshu Vidhavathi
 Yevam Dharman Prithak Pasyan-
 Thane-Vanu-Vidhavathi.

(14) As water, when rained on a mountain-ridge, runs down the rocks scattered on all sides, so does he, who beholds the objects as different, run after them only, (at all times)

Here we are again face to face with one of the celebrated *mantras* of this *Upanishad*

which is often quoted by writers and orators.

The human mind is in fact a great dynamo of superhuman energies and Godly-powers. Yet we find that the ordinary human being is a slave and a servant of his own mind rather than a master of it. In a way we may say that a similar tragedy has happened to man in the outer world too, especially, in our Machine Age. The engines conceived of by man to work for him have now become the very tyrants and iron-hearted masters at whose ever-revolving wheels man is today a helpless slave.

This tragedy in the within has come to pass because man in his delusions and ignorance has lost his capacity to control the promptings of his heart and the lusty surgings of his mind. The Supreme Wisdom and Power which is in man, gets scattered and flows in a thousand dripping rivulets down the Mount of Ignorance to get

itself lost on its downward transit. This is indicated here in this *mantra* by the beautiful analogy of water that has rained on the top of a rocky mountain. If only we could conserve the total water fall on the top of the hill with a powerful and well-engineered dam and direct the flow of the water through one single determined channel we could get out of it a lot of useful work turned out. Similarly, if man could through his discrimination control wasteful flow of energy and conserving it all, could direct it intelligently in the positive channels of right living and high thinking, he could easily get out of his very same inner equipment the power and glory of a God upon earth.

But no, man will not and cannot bless himself unless and until he slowly learns to remove his ignorance of his own Real Nature with the sacred Knowledge gained through a personal experience of his own eternal Godliness.

यथोदकं शुद्धे शुद्ध-
 मासिक्तं तद्वगेव भवति ।
 एवं मुनेर्विजानत
 आत्मा भवति गौतम ॥ १५ ॥
 ॥ इति द्वितीयोऽध्याये चतुर्थी वल्ली ॥

Yadhothakam Sudhae Sudha-
 Masiktam Tathrgeva Bhavathi
 Eram Mune-Rvijanatha
 Athma Bhavathi Gowthama.

Ethi Dvitheeyoo Adhyayae Chaturthee Valli

(15) As pure water poured into pure water becomes the same only, so the *Atman* of the thinker who knows this, becomes, O Gautama

[Thus Ends The (1८) Section in Chapter II]

This concluding *mantra* of the fourth section re-asserts the oneness of the Divine Presence in man and the Totality of Divinity that pervades everywhere. Man minus

his ego is God; God plus ego is man. Annihilation of the ego-sense in us is the becoming of God. When we totally detach ourselves from our mis-understanding and false values of a delusory life with the Knowledge of the True and the Eternal, the ego evaporates away leaving behind only the Absolute Truth in all its purity and grandeur.

At this moment the individual realises his own Real Nature as Pure Consciousness. With this Self-realisation he experiences his oneness with the All-pervading and Immortal Truth. When pure water is poured into pure water there can be pure water alone. Similarly, in realizing oneself to be the Eternal Factor, one at once realises his own oneness with the One that alone is the One. The individual-Self is the Supreme Self.

In fact even after such clear declarations if we must misunderstand the true import of the *Śruti* and cry down the

vedas as full of contradictions and vague statements we must be the most unsympathetic readers and the most dull-witted students of our Bible.

Long years of utter neglect of scriptural studies and the lack of proper teachers for the educated class have undermined the *Sanathana Culture*. These have to an extent succeeded in distorting, if not destroying, the Hindu culture especially among the rich and the upper middle class

The above tragedies have made of us today what we are : a nation of Hindus where rarely we meet a true Hindu " Even the best of them dread to read and try to understand their own Bible, the *Upanishad*

Upanishads are the very documents revealing the greatest scientific discoveries Man had ever made upon life and the values of life. Without *Upanishads* Hinduism is not a religion at all "

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

CHAPTER 2.

पञ्चमी वल्ली

SECTION (V)



अचिन्त्यमव्यक्तमनन्तमव्ययं
 विभू प्रभू भावितविश्वभावनम् ।
 त्रैलोक्यविस्तारविचारकारकं
 हरिं प्रपन्नोऽस्मि गतिं महात्मनाम् ॥

Achintya-avyakta-mananta-avyayam
 Vibhum Prabhum Bhavitha Viswabhavanam
 Thriloky v-visthara-vichara-karakam
 Harim Prapannosmi Gatham Mahathmanam

I take refuge in Hari, the goal of all great seekers, Who is the cause of the manifestation of the three worlds, the creator of the Universe—the author of the dream-play, the world—all powerful, all-pervading, imperishable, infinite, unmanifest and unthinkable.

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

CHAPTER 2.

पञ्चमी वल्ली

Section (v)

पुरमेकादशद्वार-

मजस्यावक्रचेतसः ।

अनुष्टाय न, शोचति

विमुक्तश्च विमुच्यते

एतद् वै तत् ॥ १ ॥

Puramekadasadwar-

Majasyavakrchetasah

Anushtaya Na Sochathi

Vimukthascha Vimuchyathae

Yetat Vai Tath

(1) The city of the unborn (*Brahman*), whose Knowledge is permanent, has eleven gates. Adoring Him, one does not grieve and liberated (from all bonds of ignorance), he becomes free. This varily is That.

Puramekadasadivaram. (City with Eleven Gates):—The body with its eleven opening-gates is meant here by the 'city'. We have altogether seven openings in the head, three openings in the trunk and the eleventh one is the subtle aperture called the *Brahm-randhira* at the crown of the head, famous in the *Yoga-sastra*.

The comparison of the body with a city is quite appropriate in as much as we have gates, gate-keepers, their controllers, a palace and a king under whose orders all the servants function their appointed duties very systematically and very regularly, both in a city as well as in the body. The sense-organ-openings, are the gates; the presiding deities, are the gate-keepers; the mind, the controller, and *Purusha*, the king Refer Gita V 13

Anushtaya (having meditated upon):—He who meditates upon the Lord of the Heart constantly comes to get rid of his

Ignorance and the ignorance-created ego-sense and comes to realize the True Nature of the Self. Thereafter, naturally, he grieves not, being liberated from all bonds of ignorance and becomming free from the trammels of birth and death.

This is "that" which Nachiketas had asked of his *Guru*, Lord Death, to explain.

हंसः शुचिपद् वसुरन्तरीक्षसद्
 होता वेदिपदतिथिर्दुरीणसत् ।
 नृपद् वरसद्वतसद् व्योमसदब्जा गोजा
 ऋतजा अद्रिजा ऋतं बृहत् ॥ २ ॥

Hamsa Suchishad Vasurantareekshasad
 Hotha Vedishadathidhir-Duronasad
 Nrishad Varasa-Dhritasad Vyomasad-Abja Goja
 Rithaja Adrija Ritham Brihath.

(2) As Hamsa (sun) He dwells in heaven; as Vayu (air) He dwells in the sky; as fire He dwells on the Earth; as guest He dwells in a house; He dwells in man, in the Gods, in the Sacrifice (truth) in the sky. He is

born in the waters, He is born in the earth,
He is born in the sacrifice, He is born on
the mountains; He is true and great

The *Purusha* who has been explained
in the last *mantra* as residing in the human
body is now explained in its wider aspect
as the Lordly one who presides over all the
functions in every form. The stanza gives
us a very melodious list of living organisms
and forms in the universe.

Abja (born in water).—In the form of
conch, mother-of pearl, shell, fish, insects,
in short, all aquatic animals and insects

Gojah (born of the earth).—In the form
of corn, grain, plants trees etc

Adriyah (born of mountains):—In the
form of rivers, springs, rivulets etc

ऊर्ध्वं प्राणमुन्नयत्य-

पानं प्रत्यगस्यति ।

मध्ये वामनमासीनं

विश्वे देवा उपासते ॥ ३ ॥

Oordham Prana-Munnaya-thya-
 Panam Prathyagasyathi
 Madhya Vamanamaseenam
 Viswa Devaa Upasathee.

(3) He (*Brahman*) sends the *Prana* up and throws the *Apana* down. That Adorable One seated in the Centre, all *Devas* Worship.

If the Life Centre, the *Atman*, were not within a body it is obvious that, that body will not continue to breath. Naturally, the *mantra* becomes clear when it says that He, the *Atman* or *Purusha*, is the One who maintains the flow of the different vital airs through our body and maintains it alive and active till its death

There are five principal kinds of vital energy because of which the physical body functions. They are known by different names according to the function they perform, although, they altogether constitute the One and the same Principle of Existence. The five principal kinds of *Pranas*

are called (1) *Prana*, when the cosmic power manifests through the work of the lungs and the respiratory organs; (2) *Apana*, when it works in the colon and bladder; (3) *Samana*, when it works through the digestive system; (4) *Udana*, when it works through the larynx and produces voice and (5) *Viyana*, when it expresses through the blood circulation in the body. Thus, it is carefully to be noted that *Prana* is not mere breath, *Prana* is the Vital Energy, and breath is only one of its various manifestations.

Devah (Gods).—We have already explained this term in a previous *mantra* where we clearly concluded that the word God does not represent the inhabitants of the heavenly regions, but the Five Great Elements which are the deities of the five organs-of-knowledge in man. Here it only shows that the sense-organs can function only in the blessings of the *Purusha* and so, naturally, the *Upanishad*

in its language says that *all the Devas* meaning the sense organs, *worship the One seated in the Centre.*

अस्य विस्रंसमानस्य
 शरीरस्थस्य देहिनः
 देहाद् विमुच्यमानस्य
 किमत्र परिशिष्यते ॥
 एतद् वै तत् ॥ ४ ॥

Asya Visramsamanasya
 Sareera Sthasya Deehinaha
 Dehath Vimuchyamanasya
 Kimatra Parisishyathae.
 Yetat Vai Tath.

(4) When this *Atman*, who dwells in the body departs from the body, what remains then ? This verily is That.

The *Atman* upon whom all the *Indriyas* depend and who is the controller and director of all the vital airs is the king of this City of Eleven Gates, our body. Just

as when the beloved king leaves the capital permanently to stay in a different chosen capital all the courtiers and the subject people follow the king into the new capital, so too, when the *Atman* departs from a body all the activities of that physical body seemingly depart with the *Atman*.

When once the Lord quits the body, however great the man might have been while living, his body starts to decay and perish until ultimately it reaches the dust from which the material of the body had come.

Kimatra Parisishyathae (what remains then ?) . —When the *Atman* has departed from the body what remains then in the body ? With this question *Sruti* confronts us with the sacred Truth that there remains practically nothing upon which we may come to glorify that empty shell, the dead body !!

न प्राणेन नापानेन
 मर्त्यो जीवति कश्चन ।
 इतरेण तु जीवन्ति
 यस्मिन्नेतावुपाश्रितौ ॥ ५ ॥

Na Pranena Na-Panena

Marthyo Jeevathi Kaschana

Etharena Thu Jeevanthi

Yasminetha-Vupasrithow.

(5) Not by *Prana*, not by *Apana* does any mortal live; but it is by some other, on which these two depend, that men live.

One who has followed the commentaries, and therefore the *mantras* so far, should not find any difficulty at all in understanding the direct statement of the *Sruti* when she says that a man lives not because of his body-mind-intellect-equipment is functioning well when the *Pranas* function, but, all signs of life's activities met with in a man alive, depend upon the glorious touch of the Self in him. The *Pranas* function only when life resides in the body.

Though the meaning of the stanza is clear and direct the philosophical implications in the statement of the *Sruti* is rather new to the early students in the study of the Hindu *sasthas*.

The parts of an assembly constituting an assemblage are in themselves not free. They constitute together and maintain themselves as such only for the benefit of *somebody else*, who is not himself a part of the assembly. For an example, let us take the case of a house. The walls, the rafters, the beams, the tiles etc are all parts of an assembly which constitute together the house. The house is not built for the walls, nor for the rafters, nor for the beams. They all together form an entire whole only for the sake of the Master of the house. Mr. Dass, the owner of his house, has all the freedom to walk in or walk out of his house at his own sweet will; not so, the bricks that constitute the walls!

Similarly, the *Indriyas*, the limbs of the body, the mind and intellect are all parts of the body-assembly which exist only for the sake of the *Purusha* in it. They in themselves have no freedom to act as they list; while, the *Purusha* can walk out of the body in all freedom at the time of death. When once Mr. Dass has discarded his house, in time, it perishes into ruins; when, the *Atman* leaves the body, the body perishes. The Source of Life is not the *Pranas*, the *Pranas* end and perish themselves, when the *Atman*, the Source of Life, discards its temple, the body.

In the sastric-terminology, they say that all actions, physical, mental and intellectual are *Prana-Virthies*.

हन्त त इदं प्रवक्ष्यामि

गुह्यं ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।

यथा च मरणं प्राप्य

आत्मा भवति गौतम ॥ ६ ॥

Hanta Tha Edam Pravakshyam
 Guhyam Brahma Sanathanam
 Yadha Cha Maranam Prapya
 Athma Bhavathi Gowthama.

(6) Well then, O Gouthama, I will explain the mysterious and ancient *Brahman* and also what happens to the Self, after Death

All that Lord Death had so far said seems to be but an introduction to enter the subject proper, viz : “ *what happens to the soul after death* ” “ Lord Death here kindly informs Nachiketas that he will be now initiated into the knowledge of what happens to the *Jiva* when it has once experienced the process of Death in its delusions. And surely, we shall never have a better reporter than Lord Death Himself to explain to us “what happens to the Soul” after the body has become cold and inert within the icy embrace of Death !

Atma (ego-centric).—In the *Upanishad* *mantras* we often meet with the use of the word *Atman* to indicate sometimes the body, sometimes the mind, sometimes the intellect and, yet at other times, the mind and the mind-conditioned-Pure-consciousness the *Jna*. Here, in this particular *mantra* the word *Atman* is used to indicate the ego-centre and not the Self. For, if we were to assume that the word literally means its own special connotation it would mean that the *mantra* here is contradicting the very philosophy of the *Upanishads*. Nothing ever happens to Pure Consciousness, the Truth. When Pure Consciousness, presides over the functions of this body, with reference to the body it is said to be the 'individual Soul', just as the all-pervading space with reference to the four walls of a room is said to be the 'room-space.'

In fact, the eternal space can never be conditioned or limited by the walls, which themselves stand in space! Similarly,

Consciousness or Knowledge is homogeneous and one without-a-second. When the body perishes the Divine Spark, or the Life Centre, that presided over the body while it lived, undergoes no change but eternally remains the same. The death and the consequent departure from the dead body *at the time of death*, and the feeling of having entered a new form *at the time of birth*, are both the delusory ideas of the ego-centre.

The Supreme Self reflected in the mind-intellect is, we have already seen, the *Jiva* or the ego. This ego-idea leaves its ideas of 'i-ness' and 'my-ness' with the dead body, and after an uncertain interval of existence without a body, each ego-centre comes to develop its sense of ownership and possession with another body-form.

Thus, when Lord Death says, that He will explain "what happens to the *Atma*

stones and slabs. It is often claimed in an unwarranted optimism ' that a being having once born into the human form will not, whatever be the atrocities he might commit during his life time, go down so much in the ladder of evolution as to reach the bottom-most level of mere stones ' There are even spiritual preceptors who also support this optimistic view to encourage their disciples and emphatically assert that having once come to take the incarnation as man that individual will not *on any score*, degrade himself into such a low level as that of the animal life or will ever come to exist as the inert rocks. This false optimism is smothered here by the open statement of the *Upanishad* in this *mantra*.

In the 6th *mantra* of the 1st *Vallī* (Section) we had already a clear indication of the Law of Karma and the Doctrine of Re-incarnation, when Nachiketas stated, *like corn, the mortal decay and like corn*

they are born again. In this *mantra* also the *Sruti* speaks, definitely, supporting the Law of Karma and the Doctrine of Re-incarnation.

The ego-centre after the death of the body remains intact in the form of "an idea" until it comes again to fix its relationship with another form. That which helps the "floating-ego" to choose its next rendezvous is the sum total reappings it has to make with the "new form" in the new field of things and circumstances. Indeed, there is no philosophical concept so tight in logic and so true in reason as the Law of Karma which is a special blessing enjoyed only by the Hindu community. Unfortunately, as a result of our criminal neglect of the study of our own scriptures if we have come to read in the Law of Karma only a repetition of the sapless philosophy of the Law of Destiny, it is, indeed, not the fault of the *Upanishad* seers. If properly understood Law of

Karma gives into our individual hands the privilege and the might to carve our own destinies to be lived by us in the days to come. We have discussed this matter thoroughly in our earlier lectures *

Yatha Karma (according to *Karma*) :—According to the quality of the actions performed in the past we shall have a future existence in a form and in a set of circumstances necessary to reap the required quality of re-actions in the form of experiences.

Yatha Sruthim (according to Knowledge) :—The future lives are dependent not only upon the actions committed in the past but by the degree of the Knowledge of the Reality we have gained in and through our living these-re-actions. Refer for amplification *Birhadaryanako-panishad* 12.2-13

* The reports of the *Kenopanishad* discourses edited by Seshadri and published in 6 Book-lets "THE YAGNA PRASAD"

यः एष सुप्तेषु जागर्ति कामं
 कामं पुरुषो निर्मिमाणः ।
 तदेव शुक्रं तद् ब्रह्म
 तदेवामृतमुच्यते ॥
 तस्मिंल्लोकाः श्रिताः सर्वे
 तदु नात्येति कश्चन ॥
 एतद् वै तत् ॥ ८ ॥

Yāh Yesha Suptheshu Jagarthi Kamam
 Kamam Purusho Nirmimanaha
 Tadeva Sukram tad Brahma
 Tadeva-Mritha-Muchyathao
 Tasmin-Lokaha Sritaha Sarvae
 Tadu Nathyathi Kaschchana

Yetat Vai Tath

(8) The *Purusha* who remains awake, shaping (all sorts of) objects of desires (into dreams) even while we sleep,—verily, that is the pure, the *Brahman*, and that is also called the immortal. In *That* rests all the world, and none can transcend *That*. This verily is *That* (which you asked for).

The waking-state-world of sense-objects and their cognition are not possible without the presence of Pure Intelligence within the body. So too, have we already found that the dream-world would not have been available for our experience had it not been again lit up by the very same Intelligence. In deep-sleep-state too the same Intelligence continuously illuminates for us the idea of "I do not know". Thus, Pure Intelligence, the Self, ever remains as a Witness of the three-states. It is neither awake, nor does It ever dream, nor does It ever sleep." In Its presence the three different states play the relay-race.

During the *Kenopanishad* discussions we had made this point amply clear with the analogy of a street lamp. The light of the street lamp illuminates everything that comes into its pool-of-light. It may illumine at one time a honey-moon couple singing and dancing in their new-found

joys of physical companionship; at another moment it may lit up a drunken party laughing and dancing in their intoxication; and yet, at another moment, it may lit up a moanful procession of a sad funeral bier. In all the three cases *the light of the street lamp* is neither happy as the honeymoon couple, nor drunken as the revellers, nor sad and sorrowful as the bereaved in the funeral procession !

Similarly, the Intelligence that reigns within us illuminates for us the world of the waking-state, the world of the dream-state and that of the sleep-state, without Itself ever undergoing any of these experiences.

Lord Death is now trying to point out to his disciple, Nachiketas, what the Self is, through a consideration and in terms of the experiences known to the student during his present existence in the world of ignorance. A school master knows that

the best way to start teaching a student addition or subtraction is not by directly making the child play with the numerical figures, but to make him understand the idea of addition through familiar objects. Thus it is very well known that a school-master always takes examples from the child's own life; "supposing you have ten mangoes", starts the master, "and your friend has five mangoes; how many mangoes are there between you and him?" This question is asked by the master not for the purpose of keeping the mango-accounts but to make the child understand the greater principles of arithmetic through what are already familiar to the child. Similarly, the *Upanishad* texts always adopt the method of raising a seeker into the highest realms by explaining to him the Truth Absolute in terms of the world of delusion in which he is well-versed at the moment of his approach to the feet of his teacher.

No human can be unaware of the three planes of consciousness through which he daily passes, namely, the waking-state, the dream-state and the deep-sleep-state. If now, a teacher approaches us and explains to us that there is one constant Illuminating Factor, in the presence of which alone the experiences of the three planes of consciousness become real and cognizable for us, it must necessarily be easy for us to feel for ourselves *intuitively* this Factor, the Eternal-Self.

Since, the Self is not polluted by our criminal intentions, low lusty desires, jealousies and selfishnesses of our life (just as the street light is untouched by the varied scenes it comes to illuminate), the *Atman*, as the Sole Witnessing Factor is indeed ever *Sukram* (pure).

The rest of the words in the *mantra* stand explained by themselves, to all those who have followed our detailed commentary so far.

अग्निर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो

रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव ।

एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा

रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च ॥ ६ ॥

Agni-Ryadhaiko Bhuvanam Pravishṭo

Roopam Roopam Prathi Roopo Babhoova

Ekasthadha Sarvabhootandaratma

Roopam Roopam Prathi Roopo Bahi-scha.

(9) As the one Fire, after it has entered the world, though one, takes different forms according to the thing it burns, so does the Eternal *Atman* of all living beings, though one, takes a form according to the form He enters and is (in Itself) outside all forms (also).

Of the 108 accepted *Upanishads* there is none so melodiously poetical (for its mellifluous words, its rhyme and rhythm and for the exquisite poetic ideas and pictures) as *Kathopanishad*. It would be a safe commentary to say that *Kathopanishad* is a touch-stone for both poetry and

philosophy in Sanskrit literature. In no other language in the world have we such magnanimous flights of human thoughts expressed in such breathless poetry !! In *Kathopanishad* we have a love-kindling harbour where poetry courts successfully her paramour philosophy !!

The *mantra* under discussion is an ample evidence to prove the truth of our previous statements.

The same coloured fluid in a flat bottle would look flat, in a long-tube it would look long and in a flask it would look as though spherical. Because of the different shapes we cannot label down the same fluid differently. Similarly, the dynamic Life Centre remaining the same, It illuminates different forms. The forms are different but the spiritual substance is universally the same.

The electric current that passes through a fan, a bulb, a refrigerator and a heater

is certainly the same, although because of difference of the instruments through which it passes it manifests differently as air, light, cold and heat. The *Atma-tattva*, similarly remaining the same, because of the different make up of the different minds that It comes to function through. Its manifestations become of different forms. Thus it is that *you are not me nor am I you*, because, my mind is constituted differently from yours. Yet our *Atman* is the same

Bahischa (beyond also):—Pure Consciousness, the All-prevading Truth, certainly presides in every form vitalising every cell in them, “but”, adds the *Sruti* “Truth is not limited to cover *only* the area or extent occupied by the manifested life!”.

Life in the millions of universes put together is but, according to the Lord's own words in the Gita, only one-fourth of the Divine Total! This is indicated by the *Sruti* here by emphasizing that Absolute Truth not only pervades every visible form

and invisible world, but also transcends them all. In short, the Supreme Reality is at once immanent and transcendent.

वायुर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो

रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव ।

एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा

रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बहिश्च ॥ १० ॥

Vayu-Ryadaiko Bhuvanam Prathishto

Roopam Roopam Prathi Roopo Babhoova

Ekasthadha Sarvabhootanadaratma

Roopam Roopam Prathi Roopo Bahisch.

(10) As the one Air, after it has entered the world, though one, takes different forms according to whatever it enters, so the Internal *Atman* of all living beings, though One, assumes forms, according to whatever He enters, and is outside all forms (also).

Here is another beautiful comparison to explain the same One-ness of Truth that was indicated in the previous *mantra*. Instead of Fire, Lord Death is explaining

the same Truth with the example of *Vayu*. Whether it be a horse, a donkey or a man, a creeper or a fig-tree, all live upon the same vital air, oxygen. Similarly, whatever be the name and shape of the objects in the universe that we may cognize, they are all presided over by the same Non-dual Truth Essence

Since this stanza is a close repetition of the previous one, given out by the *Sruti* for purpose of emphasis, we satisfy ourselves with just by hinting at the beauty contents of it

सूर्यो यथा सर्वलोकस्य चक्षु-
र्न लिप्यते चाक्षुषैर्बाह्यदोषैः ।

एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा

न लिप्यते लोकदुःखेन बाह्यः ॥ ११ ॥

Suryo Yatha Sarva Lokasya Chakshur-

Na Lipvathae Chakshushai-Rbahya Doshaih
Ekasthadha Sarva Bhootantaratma

Na Lipyathae Lokadukhena Bahyaha.

(11) As the Sun, the Eye of the Whole

World, is not contaminated by the defects of the external eye, so, being the Innermost Essence in all beings, *Atman* is not contaminated by the external sorrows of the world.

Sarva-lohasya Chakshu (the Eye of Whole World):—Without the light energy provided by the sun we would not have been able to make use of our eyes in discriminating the various forms and colours of the sense-objects in the world. Nor would we have moon to provide us with moonlight at least during the bright fortnights, if the sun were not there to lend its light to the moon to reflect! Apart from all these, and probably built upon a thorough knowledge of the Science of light, the ancient *Rishis* of the *Upanishads* have declared even in the *Vedic* period that Sun is the presiding deity of the sense organ, the eye. Thus, it is most appropriate to term the Sun as the Eye of the Universe.

The light of the sun illumines equally all the objects, in all conditions of health and decay. Whether the sun light illumines a scene of meritorious sacrifice or a dire scene of calculated villany, the sun light as such does not get either blessed or condemned by the qualities of the very scenes it illuminates

Similarly, the *Atman* is not tainted by the miseries of the world, arising from the *Kama* and *Karma* of the ego-centric individuals living the delusions of their own ignorance. All sorrows are created by our unrestrained desires and our attempts in the world of sense-objects to fulfil our desires through passion-motivated, self-willed-actions (*Kama Karmodhbhavam Dukham*).

Whatever be the condition of the ghost-in-the-post, the post is not in the least affected; whatever be the threatening aspects of the snake-in-the-rope; the rope is not affected; in whatever condition be the surface of the mirage-water the desert

is not at all affected " Similarly, whatever be the condition of the world and our experiences of it in our present embodiment, the Truth, which is the substratum for the delusion-created world-myth, is not in the least affected "

There are mainly two schools of thought among the Hindu philosophers as they try to explain the relative status of Truth and the world. Some claim that the Supreme Reality modified Itself to become this world as the milk gets modified to become curd. *Vedandins* condemn this point of view since it is faulty according to their line of argument. They condemn this theory on the score that if the Supreme Reality were to suffer Itself to undergo a modification, just as the milk is no more in the curd, the Supreme will have to end Itself to become the World... which is naturally absurd. Again, the *Vedandins* argue that if the world is a modification (*Parinam*) of the Supreme

Reality then according to the *Parinama-vādins* the Supreme is available for change; and that which undergoes change cannot be Eternal, but must necessarily fall within the boundaries of finiteness. Thus, if the *Parinamavād* is accepted the Supreme Reality Itself becomes a finite perishable quantity !!

On the other hand, the *Vedandins* view the creation as a super-imposition upon Truth, caused by the Jugglery of the mind, termed as *Maya*. This argument of the *Vedandins* is termed as the *Vivartavada*. Here, the Supreme undergoes no change at all but ever remains in its Eternal purity and Immortal grandeur; the rope undergoes no change, nor gains for itself even a drop of venom when a traveller in the dusk misunderstands it to be a snake !!

The *mantra* under discussion seems to support whole heartedly Shri Sankara's stand-point. Any day, the "Theory of

Modification” stands blasted in the presence of the more brilliant and satisfying “Theory of Superimposition” in explaining the Real and the unreal.

एको वशी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा
 एकं रूपं बहुधा यः करोति
 तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरा-
 स्तेषां सुखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम् ॥ १२ ॥

Eko Vasee Sarvabhoothandaratma
 Ekam Roopam Bahudha Yah Karothi
 Thamastham Ye-Nu Pasyanthi Dheera
 Sthesham Sukham Saswatham Netharesham

(12) (That) One (Supreme) Ruler, the soul of all beings, who makes His one form manifold.....those wise men who perceive Him as existing in their own Self, to them belongs Eternal Happiness, and to none else.

The self-arrogating ego-centres viewing out of themselves through the shattering instruments of their mind and intellect,

observe, everywhere nothing more sacred than an eternal variety of endless plurality. Consequently, they suffer all the pains of life, their own self-created problems of life. The mind-and-intellect-equipment has a prism-effect when the undivided beam of the Self's Light passes through it! The intelligence seemingly encased within the body can reach the outer world of sense-objects and cognize them only through the co-ordinating agent, the mind. But the wise, transcending the limitations of both their mind and intellect, learn to look out through their faculty called intuition. intuitively viewed, Truth alone is the experience available at all places and at all times !

The Self is the source of the Light which, at the interception of the mental-prism, seemingly disperses itself into the variegated band of the innumerable names and forms, which constitute the *Jagat*. The *Yogi* in his discriminating wisdom,

successfully withdraws his mind's delusory hobnobbing with its own ignorance-created plurality, and in the moments of his deep meditations his awareness comes to be aware of Itself as the Self !

Our consciousness becoming conscious of Itself, the Pure Consciousness, as the Self, is the moment of Self-realisation or *Ishwar-darshan*. In order to enjoy this moment of Supreme Bliss and Wisdom, the individual must necessarily be a highly evolved soul (*Dhruv*). Such ones alone can come to enjoy eternal bliss. That theirs alone is the experience of continued, unbroken and infinite joy is indicated here by the *Sruti*. She says that such wise men who have come to realize their Self, alone are the real men of bliss and not others. The worldly men who are engrossed in external objects and who are not endowed with discrimination are debarred by this statement to have ever a chance of enjoying Infinite Bliss

through sense-objects.

नित्योऽनित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनाना-

मेको बहुनां यो विदधाति कामान्

तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरा-

स्तेषां शान्तिः शाश्वती नेतरेषाम् ॥ १३ ॥

Nithyo-Nithyanam Chetanas-Chetanana-

Meko Bahoonam Yo Vidadhathi Kaman

Tam-Mathmastham Yenupasyanthi Dheera-

Sthesham Santhih Saswathee Netharesham.

(13) He, the Eternal among non-eternals, the Intelligence in the intelligent, who, though one, fulfils the desires of many..... those wise men who perceive Him as dwelling in their own Self, to them belongs Eternal peace, and to none else.

The method of assertion and denial adopted by the *Sruti* in the previous *mantra* is again repeated here when she reasserts, *to them belongs the Eternal Peace, and to none else.*

What is to be realized in us as the Self is discussed here and in the discussion we are provided with enough material to understand intuitively the very Nature of the Soul—which, you will remember, was the pointed query of the Brahmin seeker to his Master, Lord Death? We may say that in no *mantra* in the entire scriptural literature of the Hindus is there a passage to equal the *mantra* under discussion in its completeness and directness of statement touching almost all the important factors, that language can express, regarding the Nature of the Soul!

The world is a flux, a constant change of appearances, a transient play of names and forms. Even our very physical form is constantly changing hour by hour, through all the years of its existence. The medical science of the modern world declares that every human body, as it were, changes completely once in every seven years; at every moment old cells are dying

away and are being replaced by new ones. We come in contact with men and circumstances, and moment to moment physical habits, moment we are ever changing in our physical habits, mental make up, intellectual ideas and spiritual values. Nobody can stop the process of growth

If this constant change were to give us the idea of a continuity there must be some constant denominator that is ever constant. In the picture-houses the ever changing play of light and shade thrown out from the films gives the audience a sense of continuity because of the constant factor, the screen, behind it; without the screen the audience would have seen no story at all! Waves, ripples, bubbles, froth and foam can all have their eternal dance to give us the idea of a continuous surge only when there is the constant, unchanging, placid, depths of the oceans beneath them. The delusory ideas of a snake, a rod, a crack-in-the-earth are all

possible only when there is the unchanging truth behind it all. the rope.

Similarly, no world of flux could be possible without a base that is unchangeable and unchanging; no river can flow without a bed!

Chetana-schetanānam (Eternal among the non-eternals):—Again, if a piece of iron burns your fingers you know that the iron has no heat of its own and so must have borrowed it from fire. Similarly, if the body-mind-intellect-equipment, which is itself nothing but matter, shows at moments an intelligence almost divine we can easily presume that it has earned its intelligence from the Self, which is of nature Pure Intelligence.

Vidudhathi Kaman (who fulfils the desires of man) —Here again the Law of Karma is obviously hinted at in a broad statement that the Self or the Supreme Consciousness is the power behind the

Law of *Karma*, according to which each individual comes to live his allotted share of experience in his individual life.

The one who is thus Eternal and of nature Pure Intelligence, and who is the Force behind the immutable Law of *Karma*, is not a mere transcendental Vitality-Divine who reigns somewhere in heavens like the mortal king or the president of a country dwelling in the Capital, far away from the villages along the frontiers!! *Vedanta* is the highest achievement of man's wisdom.

The Truth declarations of the *Rishis* represent in themselves the super-human daring with which they must have plunged into the very womb of life to scoop it' and discover for themselves the palpitating soul of ones own life, the True Seat of all activities, the Permanent and Eternal Factor behind the ever-changing madness, which in its continuity gives the solid delusion called the *Jagat*.

Naturally, there have never been and there shall never be a text book more sacred and noble as the Bible of the Hindus, the *Upanishads*. If some undeveloped and unintelligent foreign intruders have raised the cry of calumny against these *mantras* as “blabberings of a humanity in childhood” etc., we, in our greater understanding shall only repeat what Christ said when he was condemned by a foolish generation, “Lord, forgive them they know not what they do”.

तदेतदिति मन्यन्ते

अनिर्देश्यं परमं सुखम् ।

कथं नु तद्विजानीयां

किमु भावि विभाति वा ॥ १४ ॥

Thadethathi Manyanthae

Aanirdasyam Paramam Sukham

Katham Nu Tadwijaneeyam

Kimubhathi Vibhathi Va.

(14) They (the Sages) perceive That

indescribable, highest bliss as ‘ *This is That* ’
 How shall I know That ? Does It shine
 (of Itself) or does It shine by another
 light ?

This *mantra* can be considered as a question raised by Lord Death Himself, only to answer the same by himself in the next *mantra*. But, personally, Chinmaya would like to understand it as a sincere question raised by the supreme student of *Vedanta* in Nachiketas.

In a previous stanza Lord Death had already explained that the Self is beyond the sense perceptions or the mind’s cognitions or the intellect’s determinations, yet, in the last two stanzas Lord Death was dilating upon the sure and permanent joys of those who come “to behold the Self.” Naturally, the intelligent students feel confused. Again, in the very same *mantra*, in the first half of it, Lord Death asserts that the men of discrimination

own understanding of the philosophical discourses so far given by his Master. When the sense-organs, the mind and the intellect are flouted and transcended, Nachiketas asks what exactly would be nature of the instrument used and the individual who uses the instrument in realising the Self as "*this is That*" ? Even those of you who can at least come to appreciate, at this moment of our discussion the entire implications of Nachiketa's doubt can be considered to have thoroughly and well followed all the discussions made by the *Sruti* so far.

We have already shown in a previous discussion, how in order to cognize and understand an object, we need the help of a light. We then also found that for perceiving the gross objects we have the gross light of the physical world, and in seeing the subtler objects of the mind, such as thoughts etc., we have the Light of Intelligence. So far, Nachiketas also.

seems to have understood well. But, when Lord Death says that the Vedantic seer transcending the regions of his mind and intellect comes to "*behold the Self*" the *Brahmin* child feels confused !!

Kimubathi (does it shine) :—A lamp is seen because of its own light, as opposed to the dull objects which get their light borrowed from a lamp (*Vibhathi Va* or does it shine by another light?).

In the philosophy of Vedanta the question is answered by the great Masters very vividly. It is a case of the Self becomming aware of Itself. The meditator when he has successfully hushed the mind and the intellect, in the throbbing silence within, his Awareness becomes conscious of Itself. This is a state of intuitive experience and not a physical cognition. It is to show this intimate "Self Awareness of the Self" that we have, in the inimitable language and style of the scripture, the expression, "*this is That*".

The Self, being itself the Light of Wisdom, needs no other light to lit Itself; when the clouds have moved away the sun that comes out from behind the screening clouds needs no other torch to make us see him : he being of nature nothing but a mass of light Similarly, when the veiling disturbances of the mind and the intellect, caused by our own ignorance of the Self, the *Atman* in Its own self-effulgence comes out to shine forth in all glory Intelligence needs no other intelligence to light Itself.

In the next *mantra* we have the answer to the question raised in this stanza.

न तत्र सूर्यो भाति न चन्द्रतारकं
नेमा विद्युतो भान्ति कुतोऽयमग्निः ।

तमेव भान्तमनुभाति सर्वं

तस्य भासा सर्वमिदं विभाति ॥ १५ ॥

Na Thatra Suryo Bathi Na Chandratharakam

Namua Vidyutho Bhanthi Kuthoya-Magnih

Thameva Bhantha-Manubhathi Sarvam

Thasya Bhasaa Sarva-Midam Vibhathi.

(15) The sun does not shine there, nor does the moon, nor do the stars, nor the lightnings shine and much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after him; by His light, all these shine.

Even today, long after we have forgotten our own great Bible, the *Upanishads*, we are hearing this *mantra* almost every day repeated in all temples and *Pujas*, since no ritual is generally concluded without chanting this *mantra* soon after, the common and well-known, "*Arathi*". None of the devotees or the Pandits, have ever come to really understand the message of this stanza except probably some who have a surface knowledge of its mere word-meaning! Our religion has become hollow and without any significance to us because of our unintelligent way of living our religion. A mere parrot like repetition of stanzas, in a language unknown to us, without seeking to understand its meaning, in itself will not and cannot give benefit

at all. There are some *Karmkandins* and orthodox monsters who claim all powers to *mantras* and *Kirtans* merely repeated, even if the one repeating them knows not their meaning nor understands their significances ! Chinmaya cannot subscribe to this false, unintelligent, hypocritical, nonsense. Were it true, why not applaud a gramophone box for the beauty of the song it had "Sung", or tap the shoulders of your radio-box congratulating it for the talk it had relayed to you ?

Tatra (There):—Lord Death is indicating here the Realm of the Self which is the Land of the Knowledge Absolute. In that Plane of Divine God-consciousness there is no need for another agent of light to illumine it. All the sources of physical light are denied in the Realm of Truth with this *mantra*, wherein Lord Death says that there is neither the Sun nor the moon nor the stars nor the lightning; and as such *where can be the light of fire ?*.

In short, there is in Light no other light other than Itself In the Sun there is no need for a torch to illumine it !!

Anubhathi (shines after):—Truth is the substratum for all the seeming activities of life. Where life is extinct the activities of the sense-organs, mind and intellect are also at an end And when these three entities in man have folded themselves, and as it were rolled out, to that individual there is no more the sun, the moon, the lightning, or the light of Fire. So long as life is in him he recognizes all the sources of light in the physical world Naturally, it is philosophically evident, and logically it can be maintained, that the Giver of All-light, (for the Sun and other sources of light) is none other than the Intelligence of the intellect, the Self Hence, Lord Death says that all *shines after It*. *By Its light all these shine*.

Now that we know the real significance of the stanza it must be possible for each

of us to think for ourselves the voiceless depth of self-evident suggestions, in ordering this *mantra* to be repeated at the close of every Hindu ritual and sacred religious ceremony. The importance of this stanza is again emphasized in the fact that the same stanza has been repeated in two more of the *ten important Upanishads* ! Thus, we have this *mantra* in *Mundakopanishad* 11-2-10 and *Swataswatara-Upanishad* VI. 14. Though in slightly different words we have the same transcendental idea that the Self is the source of all light hinted at in the *Bhagwat Gita* XV 6.

॥ इति द्वितीयोऽध्याये पञ्चमी वल्ली ॥

Here ends Chapter *two* Section *five*.

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

CHAPTER 2

पण्यी वल्ली

SECTION (VI)

GLORY OF KIRTAN.

चेतोदर्पणमार्जनं भवमहादावाग्निनिर्वापणम्
 श्रेयः कैरवचन्द्रिकावितरणं विद्यावधूजीवनम् ।
 आनन्दांबुधिवर्धनं प्रतिपदं पूर्णामृतास्वादनं
 सर्वात्मस्तपनं परं विजयते श्रीकृष्ण संकीर्तनम् ॥

The songs of His Glory cleanses the mind's mirror, puts out the conflagration of *Samsar*, blesses the lotus of success as a full-moon, raises (high tides in) the bosom of the oceanic Bliss, each phrase of which is over-flowing with the nectar of Joy, and makes one bathe in the Supreme Truth and thus helps one to become the Lord of Knowledge (*Vidya*)

The Attitude of the Kirtanist.

वृणादपि सुनीचेन, तरोरपि सहिष्णुना ।
 अमानिना मानदेन, कीर्त्तनीयः सदा हरिः ॥

Hari's Name are to be chanted by those (who can live in an attitude of being) humbler than the humblest blade of grass, with more forbearance than the (patient) trees, without vainful self-glorifications but all the same ever ready to glorify all others

[*Sree Chaitanya*]

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

CHAPTER 2.

षष्ठी वल्ली

Section (vi)

ऊर्ध्वमूलोऽवाकशाख

एषोऽश्वत्थः सनातनः ।

तदेवशुक्रं तद् ब्रह्म

तदेवामृतमुच्यते ।

तस्मिंल्लोकाः श्रिताः सर्वे

तदुनात्येति कथन ॥

एतद् वै तन् ॥ १ ॥

Urdhammo'a-Avaka-sha

Asho-Ashvathar Sanathanaha

Tadava Sukram Iam Brahma

Tadava-Mritha-Mruchyathas

Tasmim-Lokaha Sritaha-Sarvas

Tadu Natyatali Kaschchana

Yetath Vai Tan.

This is the ancient *Ashvatho*-tree
roots-creatore and whose branches

(spread) below That is verily the pure, that is *Brahman*, and that is also called the Immortal. In that rest all the worlds, and none can transcend it Verily this is That.

All those who have at least a scrappy knowledge of Sanskrit are advised to get hold of a copy of Shri Shankara's Commentary upon this *mantra*; it is a piece of joy. Even the great philosopher-saint Sri Sankaracharya was seemingly carried away into the realm of pure poetry and literature at the beauty of the deep suggestions contained in the above *mantra*

Just as the sweet scent of the night-flower wafting towards us can give us an idea of not only the presence of the night-queen-shrub but also the roots that sustain the plant, so too the *Śruti* from an observation of the finite world of names and forms wants to deduce "the root of it all" that lie in a region concealed from our superficial observations. Thus, in order

to point out an unseen cause for the seen and experienced effects, the scripture is here bringing out a beautiful comparison of the universe projected out from Reality in the form of an *Aswatha*-tree (*Peepal tree*). It is also relevant here to remember that in describing the same fig-tree, Lord Vyasa also has devoted three entire stanzas in the opening of the XV Chapter in his master-piece, *Shri Bhagvath Gita*.

Shankarachariya in his commentary also provides us with a reason why the *Samsar* has been compared to a tree by the *Sruti*; in Sanskrit the word '*Vriksha*' means a tree 'because it is felled' (*Vrischanath*)

There is no tree so commonly known to the majority which is so extensive in growth, sturdy in built and longer in its duration of life as the *Peepal*, that *Sruti* could not have thought of another tree equally appropriate, to compare it with

the world of plurality. Generally, the professional writers of cheap bazar notes led away by the literal word meaning, explain the tree of *Samsar* as having its roots above and the branches hanging down. This is absurd and even the *Sruti* statements cannot make any *Aswatha*-tree do a *Sināsasan* however much misguided artists may try with their colours to represent this misreading of the *Sruti* texts by Sanskrit Pundits! Sankara has very pointedly hinted at this mis-understanding.

Urdhawa-Moola (roots up)—The word *Urdhawa* here does not mean “up”, in the sense of geometrical “up”, but it is used to indicate the idea of “reverence”. Thus, of the many parts of the Tree of *Samsar* the root is much more sacred and hence *Urdhawa*; the Tree of *Samsar* has its roots sucking out its sap from that “*Vishnoho Paramam Padam*” (the Supreme place of Vishnu—the All-pervading *Atman*).

Again, there can be yet another reason

why *Sruti* has chosen this *Peepal*-tree for her purposes of representing *Samsar*. The very word *Aswatha* can be liquidated in Sanskrit in three component parts meaning thereby "that which will not be tomorrow" (*swa* means to-morrow in Sanskrit). *Samsar* is a word that indicates the world of the finite-objects, where death and destruction are the constant happenings : no simpler word could have more completely and so effectively indicated the world of perishable objects as the *Aswatha*.

In spite of our repeated efforts at finding for them sufficient reasons to generate their appreciation of this gem of poetry and philosophy, our educated Hindu brethern, in their hardened prejudices against the style and contents of the *Upanishads* might yet find some difficulty in understanding it. Chinmaya may here try to give for them yet another example.

Have you not seen, in your history text books, charts representing the line of

descendents of the various ruling families ? Each of them starts with a great grand-sire and then branches out into sons and daughters, who, each of them, again spreads out into an array of grand-sons and grand-daughters *add infinitum* Don't these printed charts look like a tree with its root up ! And they are literally called in English as the charts of *family-trees* ! If our modern historians in their matter-of-fact, unpoetic, approach to data can come to use such a poetic idea of a *family-tree*, would you not, if not in sympathy, at least in an intellectual understanding give the *Rishis* of the *Upanishads* the benefit of doubt !

In short, the *Upanishad* wants us to understand only the simple fact that the finite world, the *Aswatha* is itself rooted in Truth and maintains itself from the nourishments drawn from the Absolute Truth The *Samsar* is a "tree", mainly because it can be cut down and removed

once for ever with the firm axe of discrimination (Pincha) Refer *Gita* XV-3

यदिदं किञ्च जगत् सर्वं
 प्राण एजति निःसृतम् ।
 महद्भयं वज्रमुद्यतं
 य एतद् विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥ २ ॥

Yadidam Kincha Jagat Sarwam

Prana Ehati Nih Sritam

Mahat-Bhavam Vajramudyatham

Ya Ethad Vidura-mritasthau Bhavanthi

(2) This whole universe evolved from the *Brahman*, moves (vibrates) in the *Prana* (in the highest *Brahman*) That *Brahman* is a great terror, like an uplifted thunder-bolt Those who know this become immortal

The same idea described in the previous *mantra* is brought into a greater relief in this stanza in a more direct and scientific language Perhaps, *Shuti* Herself realizes that in the crowded details of her analogy

of the *Aswatha*-tree the student may be apt to over look the deep significances contained in it: "that the entire tree is rooted in and is maintained by the world of Truth".

Pran—(or *Pranae*) :—It may be interpreted as nominative (*Prathama*) or as the vii case (*Saptamī*), it may be interpreted as, "the whole universe arose from *Brahman* and moves in *Prana*", or as, "the *Prana* being present (*Pranae sati*) the whole universe comes out of Him and vibrates in Him

Prana means here the *Brahman*, and this Eternal Reality is the One Source from which the world of appearances has emerged out, is existing and at the end of time shall merge back into.

Ejathi (vibrates).—Creation and the worlds created are considered by many of the Indian philosophers as so many "stresses" in the Infinite. Modern science in the west has also come to a similar conclusion that the world of matter is

entirely constituted of energy-units moving at a terrific speed in their eternal vibrations. When an atom was split, the physicists could mechanically discover that it is constituted of the electrons and protons, moving at a high velocity around and about a central motionless neutron. They also found out that if by some method they could change the frequency of vibration of the energy-particles in an atom to the frequency maintained in the electronic vibrations in another element, they could, change one element into another! If the atoms are nothing but energy particles vibrating at a high frequency, molecules constituted of atoms must necessarily have no real substance but must only be energy particles vibrating, and matter is nothing but a mass of molecules! Thus matter has been discovered in the laboratory to be nothing but energy vibrating "

Now then, it cannot be much of a

difficulty for the modern Hindu to accept the statement of this *mantra* that "creation is a motion, a vibration of energy" and that it is possible for the vibration to maintain itself only if there be a motionless and unvibrating medium, the Absolute Reality. Constant change can certainly give us the delusion of a form; only there must be a constant medium for the changes to play or at least a constant axis upon which they play. Thus, when a lit up Jaw-stick (*aggarbati*) is rotated fast round the same axis we can detect the jaw-stick maintaining itself a form of a golden circle. The golden circle has no existence except in the constancy of change at the brilliant tip. Similarly, constant vibration of energy in a medium of Absolute Energy, and maintaining itself within the field of a constant axis gives us that ocean of sense objects made up of things and beings.

To be sure, this idea seemingly

discovered only recently, must have been the common knowledge among the Aryans of the *Vedic period*; else, *Srutis* would not have felt satisfied herself by merely mentioning *the whole universe vibrates in Prana*.

Mahadbhayam (a great terror):—Nothing in the universe happens haphazardly. Nature moves in rhythm. There is an immutable law that governs the movement of stars, planets etc. There is a constancy in the working of all the laws of nature. Everything is scheduled to happen according to some strict commands; as though there is a very severe law-maker and a strict maintainer of these laws! In this sense, the scripture states here that the finite world of names and forms seems to exist and function, so diligently and readily as though the Master of the Laws is standing right behind them with a raised whip!!

The *mantra* on the whole indicates that

the source of all manifestations is not an inert non-existence, as some of the Bhudhistic schools of philosophers believe and try to maintain, but the ultimate source of all lives is an active and dynamic existence which in its nature is Pure Intelligence Itself.

Those who know this highest *Brahman*, the Source of All Life, the substratum for the eternal play of change, to be the Vital Factor in themselves, they shall attain Immortality !

भयादस्याग्निस्तपति

भयात्तपति सूर्यः ।

भयादिन्द्रश्च वायुश्च

मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चमः ॥ ३ ॥

Bhayad-Agni-Sthapathi

Bhayat Thapathi Suryaha

Bhayat Indra-Scha Vayu-Scha

Mritbyu-Rdhawathi Panchama

(3) For fear of Him the fire burns; for fear of Him shines the sun; for fear of Him do Indra, Vayu and Death, the fifth, proceed (with their respective functions).

If *Brahman*, the Supreme Reality, were not there, not only to declare by Its Will the law of existence, but to control and govern it, and thus ultimately ensure its smooth functioning, we would not have had, to be sure, such a systematic and scientific consistency in the laws of Nature. Had it not been for this eternal fear for the supreme authority of the Transcendental Reality, we could not have had any science text books; as for that matter, life itself would have been impossible. For example, supposing fire chooses to take a holiday from its nature and thus prove itself to be cold, the milk over the oven would probably remain colder than when it was put on fire, even after hours of waiting ! No life would have been possible then in the sense of a systematic and continuous living, for,

the planets could then, at their will, stray away from their appointed paths in the heavens !! Almost as frequently as we are having motor accidents, train-collisions and plane-crashes in these days in our ill-organized world, we could have had daily collisions between stars and among planets !

But on the other hand we are seeing that the universe is running smoothly and harmoniously in a perfect orderly manner Sun, Fire, Indra, Vayu and Death are all working with a beautiful team spirit

This idea that nature strictly keeps herself within the word and spirit of the Eternal Laws due to her fear for the Supreme is repeated with almost the same vigour if not in the same words in *Taittiriya-Upanishad* II. 8-1 also.

Panchamah (fifth):—Death is considered the fifth in the direct numerical order Previously the *mantra* has already enumerated four different names as Fire, Sun,

Indra and Vayu. So, naturally, death is the fifth.

इह चेदशकद् बोद्धुं
 प्राक् शरीरस्य विस्रसः ।
 ततः सर्गेषु लोकेषु
 शरीरत्वाय कल्पते ॥ ४ ॥

Eha Chedashakat Bodhum
 Prak Sareerasya Visrasaha
 Tathah Sargeshu Lokeshu
 Sareer-Twaya Kalpathao

(4) If here (in this life) one is able to comprehend Him (Brahman) before the death of the body, he will be liberated from the bondage of the world; if one is not able to comprehend Him, then he has to take a body again in the worlds of creation

Ignorance can be ended only with knowledge; ignorance and knowledge cannot remain together at one place at the

same period of time. Knowledge ends in Ignorance, as light ends in darkness

The ignorance of our Real identity has made us identify ourselves with the mind, intellect and body delusions; and this is the start for our ego-centric life of pains and limitations. There is no other achievement more sacred and glorious which a human seeker can achieve within the duration of his existence as man, than the realisation of his Real Identity with the Unlimited Eternal Absolute Self

One identifying with the Self during his life time here, gains the Eternal *Padavi* of deathless perfections. Having realized this Real Nature, there cannot be for such an individual any more of the pains of birth and death. After having woken up from the dream, one need not run to the side-board to snatch his rifle to shoot down the tiger that hunted him down in his dream ! After a dream-ride when the

dreamer wakes up he need not run out to take his dream horse to water! Having woken up from the dream of the ego-centric agonies into the waking state of the Knowledge of the Self, the God-man will not and need no more repeat the to-and-fro-swinging between the arcs of birth and death.

If an individual fails to realize the Eternal Nature of his Self during his life time, he after departing from his present manifestations, will have to take up yet another form and come back to this wretched plane of limitations and finiteness. This is true because the ego-sense can ultimately end, we have found, only at the final shifting of our present identifications with our body, mind and intellect to a real understanding, born of first hand experience, of the True Nature of our Eternal Self-hood, which is the Source of all Life in us. As long as an individual has not come to have this subjective

realisation of the Self, so long his ego-sense persists, so much so, when the 'I-ness' and 'my-ness' in him drop off their present physical body they remain in tact together as an "idea-ego," and in time, it associates itself with another form maintaining and developing its egoness with that chosen form

Sruti here kindly warns all sincere seekers to strive hard in realizing this final Mission of Life which takes the individual from the mortal levels to the heights of Eternal Perfection. This Supreme Goal is the final fulfilment of the struggle of evolution. Man alone is the sacred creature who has been endowed with the necessary equipments of a sensitive mind a highly reasoning capacity, with a judicious and trained application of which, he can deliberately hasten his own evolution. In nature no other creature has this divine freedom to speed up its own evolution.

यथादर्शं तथात्मनि

यथा स्वप्ने तथा पितृलोके ।

यथाप्सु परीव दृष्टे तथा गन्धर्व-

लोके च्छायातपयोरिव ब्रह्मलोके ॥ ५ ॥

Yadhadarsae Tadha-Thmani

Yadha Swapnae Tatha Pithr-Lokae

Yadhapsu Pareeva Dadrisae Tadha Gandharva

Lokae Chayatapayoriva Brahma-Lokae

(5) As in a mirror, so (*Brahman* can be clearly seen) here within one's own Self; as in dreams so in the world of the forefathers; as in water, so in the world of the *Gandharvas*, as in light and shade, so in the world of *Brahman*.

In every phrase of this *mantra* almost an entire *Upanishad* is packed so that the whole stanza literally seems to bend down with the weight of its own meaning. On the first reading it may suggest to you as an almost clear and plain statement. This is the trick of the *Upanishadic* style; the

simpler it looks the more pregnant it would be in its significances.

In the previous *mantra* we have been advised that in our life the greatest achievement would be that of realizing our own Real Nature. Now in this *mantra* Lord Death is trying to explain to his disciple, Nachiketas, how realization of the Self in the human existence is much more sacred, compared with the possibilities of realization in other different planes of existence.

As men we are living in a plane of consciousness where we have certain kinds of experiences which we gain through our sense-organs, mind and intellect, when these come to react with an available external world of sense-objects. Just as our experiences of the waking-state-world are not the same as our experiences in our dream-world, so too there can be other planes of consciousnesses wherein different

degress of experiences can be our lot. Thus, we have the *Pitrloka* (the world of the manes) where the individual has only the mind-and-intellect-equipment and not the physical body. Naturally, the experiences gained by the subtle-body must be different from our own experiences, wherein the body with its demands, cravings, pains and joys will colour our experiences to give us on the whole a totally different life. Similarly, the experiences in the world of the *Gandharvas* (divine nymphs, instinctly clever in music, dance and such other allied arts) and in the plane of consciousness called the *Hanyagarbha* or the *Brahma Loka* (the Total Mind) must each be totally different from those in all the other worlds. Here, *Sruti* is trying to give the comparative clarity with which the Absolute Knowledge can be reached by the seekers in different planes of existence

(as in a mirror):— Man,

reflection, merges itself, *in-a-process-of-knowing*, to become one with the Self; seeing the reflection we do not actually come to know so much the reflection as, through it, we come to understand the source of the reflection, our own face.

If once we have grasped this point clearly in all its pregnant import we shall easily understand the other comparisons used in explaining the different degrees of clarity with which a seeker can realize his own Self in the different planes of conscious existence.

All those who have been regularly following so far the Yagna discourses are sure to understand the depth of the significances in the comparisons *as in dream so in the world of the fore-fathers and as in water so in the world of the Gandharvas*. Chinmaya does not wish to commit the sin of repetition

Chhayatapayoriva (as in light and

shade) —In *Aras a I*, the *Script* explains, the Knowledge of the Self can be certainly most clear, as clear as black-letters would be against a white/black-ground'. In fact, *Script* is unequivocally emphatic in her assertion that Self-realisation in the World of the Cosmic Mind is the clearest. But we should not forget that this Plane of Consciousness is very difficult to be reached for this is the lot given to such co-sentient who have come to gain the required merits through a synthetic Yoga of both *Karma* and *U'pa-sana* (worship and meditation). The one, having reached the *Brahma Loka* according to the scriptures, remains there enjoying for long the subtlest joys of that world, until at last, ultimately, guided by the Creator Himself, all of them attain Immortality when that Plane of Consciousness gets folded back into the Absolute during the periodical *Pralayas* (deluge). This process of Self-realisation is termed as *Krama Mukthi* (liberation by stages) in

the Vedantic text books.

इन्द्रियाणां पृथग्भाव-
 मुदयास्तमयौ च यत् ।
 पृथक्उत्पद्यमानानां
 मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥ ६ ॥

Indriyanam Pridhak Bhawa-
 Udayasthamyow Cha Yath
 Pridhak-Utpadyamananam
 Mathwa Dheero Na Sochathi

(6) A wise man,—having understood, that the senses separately produced are distinct from the *Atman* and also their rising and setting,—grieves no more.

One who has read the previous *mantra* and has thoroughly understood its significances shall surely come to ask the question, “why, after all, should one try to realize the Eternal Self in the human life ?” The answer is given by *Sruti Bhagwati* in this *mantra*.

The sense-organs are distinctly separate from the Eternal and Changeless Truth that resides in us. The senses are separate from the *Atman* because they are effects produced out of certain causes, while the *Atman* is the very Uncaused Cause. Again, the five different sense-organs are each different not only in themselves but in their very original causes, the five *Indriyas* arise out of the five fundamental elements.

Not only are they in themselves thus different, and arise from different causes, but they are also eternally changing as they re-act from moment to moment differently with the different objects that come in contact with them! In the waking-state they are all quite receptive and available for their individual expressions; while, the moment the individual is asleep the capacity of his sense-organs to re-act with their objects fold itself into a state of dormancy (*Udayasthamyow*, rising and setting) and the folded up abilities and

capacities in the *Indriyas* seem to manifest themselves all at once, the moment the individual wakes up from his sleep !'

A wise discriminating man differentiating between the Eternal Factor, the *Atman*, and the ever-changing play of passing expressions in his *Indriyas*, he comes to *grieve no more*. All our sorrows in life are due to our lending ourselves to the mis-understanding that we are the ego-centres, victims of all our mental demands, intellectual assertions, and sense-appetites. In the right knowledge of our total independence from the wounding chains of these limitations we shall reach a state of existence where sorrow or grief has no meaning. The State of Perfect Bliss eternally untouched by sorrow is the *Padavi* (status) that *Sruti* promises to one who dares follow the Razor *Path of Knowledge* and realises the Self in this very birth, as She called upon us to do in the previous two *mantras*. That a Self-realized

soul would eternally be beyond all sorrows is a statement often repeated in our sacred scriptural literature. “ *Tara thi Shoka-Mathmavith*” (the knower of the Self goes beyond the shores of sorrow) says another *Upanishad*.

इन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनो

मनसः सत्त्वमुत्तमम् ।

सत्त्वादधि महानात्मा

महतोऽव्यक्तमुत्तमम् ॥ ७ ॥

Indriyabhyah Param Mano-

Manasah Sattwa-Muttamam

Sattwa-Dadhi Mahanatma

Mahatho-Avyakta-Muthamam.

अव्यक्तात् तु परः पुरुषो

व्यापकोऽलिङ्ग एव च ।

यं ज्ञात्वा मुच्यते जन्तु-

रमृतत्वं च गच्छति ॥ ८ ॥

Avyakthat Thu Paraha Purusho

Vyapako-Alinga Eva Cha

Yam Gyatwa Muchyathae Janthu-

Ramritattwam Cha Gachchathi.

(7) Beyond the senses is the mind, beyond the mind is the intellect, beyond the intellect is the Great *Atman*. Superior to the Great *Atman* is the Unmanifest.

(8) And verily beyond the unmanifested is the all-pervading *Purusha* devoid of all distinctive marks, knowing whom the creature (the knower) is emancipated and he attains immortality

These two *mantras* are taken together because we had already commented exhaustively on all the points raised in the first *mantra* and also upon the points declared in the first part of the second stanza. As we had in *Valli* III-10, here again the *mantra* is only repeating what had already been said regarding the ascending spiral that takes us from the grossest to the subtlest Principle in us. Please refer back to the commentaries given earlier for the stanza referred to. (*Valli* III. 10).

The *Purusha* or the subtlest of the subtle Factor in us is explained here as *Vyapaka* (all-pervading) and *Alinga* (without distinctive characteristics, properties, etc.).

Atman being the subtlest of the subtle, we have discussed before, it must necessarily be an all-pervading *Tattwa*.

In the *Sanskrit* logicians' vocabulary the word *Linga* has a particular connotation, a scientific import and is used in philosophical discussions only at such places where the philosopher wants to point out its scientific meaning. Much of our knowledge is made out of our capacity to infer. Almost all our knowledge of things not yet seen, is derived through the source of knowledge called *inference*. When there is a lot of smoke rising from a point in the distant range of hills we, from our point of observation, infer that there is fire in the hill. The sign or the

distinctive mark, viz. smoke, observing which we come to the definite *inference*, is called the *Linga* in the logicians terminology

With this knowledge of the exact connotation of the word, we can now easily understand the import of the scripture when She says that the *Purusha* is devoid any *Linga*. It means that there are no properties or qualities or such other indicative signs by which we can directly perceive, and, therefore, come to realise the Self in us.

He who realises this Self through a subjective experiencing, not only does he get liberated from the shackles of mortal limitations, but, the *Sruti* asserts, most surely, will he be reaching a Deathless State of Eternal Existence. "*Brahmavith Brahmaiva Bhavathi*" (knower of *Brahman* becomes *Brahman*), is the incessant declaration of all *Sruties*.

न सन्दृशे तिष्ठति रूपमस्य
 न चक्षुषा पश्यति कश्चनैनम् ।
 हृदा मनीषा मनसाभिकल्पतो
 य एतद् विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥ ६ ॥

Na Sadraśe Thishtathi Roopamasya
 Na Chakshusha Pasvathi Kaschanainam
 Hrida Maneeṣha Manasābhi-Kalpato
 Ya Yedath Vidu-Ramritastha Bhavanthi

(9) His form is not to be seen No one beholds Him with the eye By controlling the mind by the intellect and by incessant meditation He is revealed. Those who know This (*Brahman*) become immortal ones.

That the Self is beyond the fields of the sense-organs and the mind and the intellect has by now been very often repeated by the *Sruti* in different *mantras*. If none of these instruments of cognition, feeling and understanding are available for the seeker in realising the Supreme, the ill-informed

aspirant is apt to feel despaired and may come to throw up all his attempts to live the Life Divine, saving that the goal promised by the *Śruties* is an impossibility. Hence, this *mantra* is explaining to us the last leap with which the seeker, during his meditation, crosses over the frontiers of his mind and intellect and reaches the Land of Truth

Na Chakshushah Pashyati (none can see Him with the eyes) : — Here the word eye is a representative word (*Upalakshna*) which in its true meaning in the *mantra* indicates all the sense-organs. The *Upa-nishad* is here clearly and pointedly making the daring statement that God will not present Himself to his devotees, for them to “see” Him with their naked limited sense-organ of vision. All visions are delusory hallucinations of the mind, however satisfying and gloriously divine they may look to be !!

The only method by which a seeker

can come to realize his Self is through the faculty of intuition which is now lying dormant in man's intellect. The intellect resides, according to the poetic *Sruti*, in the cave-of-the-heart and from its glorious seat of activities controls the workings of the mind. When the mind is silent the intellect gains an inner peace. An intellect thus in complete peace dies itself away or disappears leaving behind a newly born potency in us called intuition. It is with this intuition that a seeker comes to realize his Self. Intuition is nothing but "*the capacity to know the knowledge*". And knowing the Self is but the Self becoming aware of Itself.

For purposes of emphasis *Sruti* is again repeating that the one who has, during his sojourn here, come to rediscover himself to be nothing other than the Pure Consciousness presiding in him as his own Self, shall himself become Immortal and thus get away from the whirl of births and

deaths.

यदा पञ्चावतिष्ठन्ते

ज्ञानानि मनसा सह ।

बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टते

तामाहुः परमां गतिम् ॥ १० ॥

Yadha Panohava Thishtanthae

Gyanani Manasa Saha

Budhischa Na Vicheshtathae

Thamahuh Paramam Gatham.

(10) When the five organs of knowledge are at rest together with the mind, and when the intellect ceases functioning (becomes calm) that they call the highest state

Here we have the clearest exposition as far as language and intellect can go, of that State of Eternal Auspiciousness experienced when the Soul meets the Soul (*samadhī*). When the five sense-organs are perfectly controlled, naturally, the mind is

devoid of almost ninety-per-cent of its activities. What little field the mind has now to get itself agitated in is constituted of its stored away memories and self-created immaginations. When even these agitations are controlled, we reach the State explained in the *mantra* as the State when the sense-organs are at rest along with the mind. Even this is not sufficient. For, at this stage the intellect will be throbbing, though of course it shall be very feeble, with its own ideas and ideals. The *Upanishad* wants us to reach a state where the sense-organs, the mind and the intellect are all at rest. And this State is defined by the *Sruti* as the State of vitally experiencing the Supreme Absolute Reality, the Self.

“As a matter of fact have we not almost everyone of us experienced a state wherein our sense-organs, mind and intellect are not at play? In sleep we all know that neither our *Indriyas* nor our *Man* nor our *Budhi* comes to interfere with our

peacefulrest with their endless death-dances; then are we not experiencing the Reality during all the occasions when we are plunged in deep sleep? If the condition of sleep be the condition of Reality, is the *Upanishad* asking us to be nothing more than idlers, sleeping round the clock all the days?", thus asks the Sceptics.

Such and other similar questions would rise up in the mind of the un-initiated when they superficially read the *mantra* now under discussion—entirely in itself. In fact this *manta* has no independent existence without the total knowledge we had so far acquired from the learned discourses of Lord Death. We must read this stanza specially in the light of the previous one

There is a lot of difference between sleep and the State of Self meeting the Self. The condition of *Samadhi* is often explained to us as something very near

sleep, because living as we are in a very gross plane of consciousness, the God-men of the *Upanishads* could not explain to us their transcendental experiences but in terms of our own world of limited experiences. The nearest state they could find, which man is enjoying and which can be favourably compared with the State of *Samadhi* is sleep. in the sense, while we are sleeping our sense-organs, mind and intellect are at rest. *The comparison is only so far as it explains this common similarity.*

During moments of God-consciousness the individual transcends his mind and intellect to reach the Land of the Eternal Consciousness, while a man in sleep has only folded up his mind, intellect and sense-organs for the time being and finds himself reaching the dark Land of the Unconscious ! The one in sleep is drowned in the darkness of ignorance; the one in *Samadhi* is in the shine of Knowledge.

The sleeper is a slave in a negative living while the Knower is a master in a positive existence. These ideas are hinted at in the unwritten space between the above two stanzas !

In order to delve deep into our own bosom and light up the match of intuition, so that it may flare up and blow off the veiling walls of mental and intellectual disturbances and thus finally reveal the Self unto the Self, what exactly is the process to be pursued ? This question is answered in the following *mantra*.

तां योगमिति मन्यन्ते
स्थिरामिन्द्रियधारणाम् ।
अप्रमत्तस्तदा भवति
योगो हि प्रभवाप्ययौ ॥ ११ ॥

Tham Yogamithi Manyanthae
Sthiraamindriya - Dharanam
Apramastha-Sthada Bhavathi
Yogo Hi Prabhava-Pyayow.

(11) The firm control of the senses they regard as *Yoga*. Then the *Yogin* becomes free from all vagaries of mind; for, the *Yoga* is acquired and lost

The method of practice pursued by a Vedantic student in order to develop his intuitive power and with that to come to realise ultimately his own Self and thus become immortal is being explained here. The process of Self-development and self-perfection is *Yoga*; if truly practised *Yoga* promises us its goal to be God-hood. Here the scripture clearly exclaims that *Yoga* means in its practical application, *the firm control of the sense-organs*. A certain amount of sense control comes as a matter of habit to one who has come to live under discreet rules of decent life; but an individual will not like the restriction imposed on him to walk out of his form, to resist the temptations to reduce, although his mind may get attracted by the charms of his resistance.

An individual is helped much in his self-control, no doubt, if the spirit of his age is one that follows the *Dharmas*. If we are finding today a greater dose of barbarianism and cruelties among our children who are coming out of the universities, than it was among our fore-fathers of a couple of generations back, we know for certain the source for the low negativities among the modern educated class. These children, innocent victims of the Spirit of the Age, are not to be condemned at all for the life of sensations they are seeking or the voluptuous excesses they are tempted to enjoy! If they are to be condemned much more shall we condemn ourselves, for, certainly, we have, through our own commissions and omissions, contributed much to the poisonous spirit of the present. Flouting truth and breaking the codes of morality and ethics in conscious acts of our own arrogances we have allowed the Spirit of

our times to fall so low from its ideal peak to reach the lowest depths of today's desperations.

Fortunately, for the Vedic Period they maintained a strict code of *Dharmas*. *Sanathandharma* was the Spirit of that Age; and the descendents for a long time, till the recent present, have been, by a super-fine system of communal living and through an ordered and rigid system of social values, trying to keep up the spirit of *Sanathandharma*. If there is yet a greater dose of individual inner joy experienced by the millions in our Indian Villages, inspite of their poverty, starvation, death and diseases, we have only to thank the ever-blessing, time-tested system of happy living called the *Sanathan Dharma*. Compared with a modern citizen in the greatest of our cities, New York, we can definitely say that mentally speaking the poor Indian ryot is any day enjoying a greater share of inward peace

and joy than his American brother *Santi* is the product of contentment and not the ghastly child born of sensuous flirtations with sense-objects

Apologies for this digression. The amount of sense control a man comes to enjoy, therefore, depends much upon the Spirit of the very Age he is living in. In the penultimate state of Self-development the individual gains more and more control over his sense-organs through his practices at self-control. Certainly, the final and total control over the *Indriyas* comes only from the moment of full realisation of the Self ("*Param Drishtwa Nivarthathae*").

Yoga, to a student of *Vedanta*, starts with and is continued in self-control. To him the extreme development of his powers of concentration through a successful achievement in the control of his sense-organs is the greatest of *Tapas* (*Ekaagryam Paramam Tapah*).

Control of the sense-organs does not merely mean the mere negative idea of taking our-sense organs away from their sense-objects. This is only half the battle. Success can be achieved in self-control only when our minds are fixed firmly in steady concentration and meditation upon the *Atman*

At this time of his self evolution the *Yogi* becomes careful and does not allow his mind to fall back into its usual ruts of sensuous thinking. For, a true student of *Vedanta* knows fully well that unless he be very careful, the control gained over his senses might at any time get lost in the severe temptations of passing moments; especially so when the *Yogin* lives in the same accustomed plane of sense-objects. *Sruti* kindly warns in her own words how easy it is even for the highly developed students of *Yoga* to get themselves lost, in the midst of their own successes, if even for a moment they become careless.

Indeed, the *Path of Knowledge*, dangerous but the shortest, is a Razor Path wherein a slip means total annihilation.

नैव वाचा न मनसा

प्राप्तुं शक्यो न चक्षुषा ।

अस्तीति ब्रुवतोऽन्यत्र

कथं तदुपलभ्यते ॥ १२ ॥

Naiva Vacha Na Manasa

Prapthum Sakyo Na Chakshusha

Asthithi Bruvatho-Anyatra

Kadham Tad-Upalabhyathae.

(12) The Self cannot be reached by speech, by mind, or by the eye. How can it be realised otherwise than from those who say, "He is" ?

The *Atman* is the controller of the entire mechanism of life. Just as a driver, while driving the car, cannot get himself run over by the same car, so also the sense-organs, mind, and intellect functioning because of the Life Centre behind them

cannot turn themselves upon the very *Atman* and know Him as one of the objects of their cognition, feeling or understanding!

Naturally. Lord Death here in his exclamations conveys to his dear disciple the accepted belief in *Vedanta* that there is no other source of knowing the existence of the *Atman* than the sacred Divine words of the scriptural declarations (*Sabda Pramanam*) and their living symbols, the realized Saint. Whatever arguments you may bring out in favour of the existence of the One *Atman* in all living forms, there can be equally efficient, intellectual and metaphysical arguments to meet and completely floor down the arguments of a Seer and prove just the opposite! the non-existence of the *Atman*. No amount of argument of metaphysical ratiocination can help a seeker to reach the Absolute Truth. Every seeker will have to start his own pilgrimage with his indomitable courage and faith in the words of his Master.

अस्तीत्येवोपलब्धव्य-

स्तत्त्वभावेन चोभयोः ।

अस्तीत्येवोपलब्धस्य

तत्त्वभावः प्रसीदति ॥ १३ ॥

Asthi-Thyavo-Palabdhahvya-

Tatwabhavena Chobhayoho

Asthi-Thyavo-Palabdasya

Tatwabhavah Praseedathi.

(13) He should be known to exist as Be (*Asthi*) and also as He really is Of these two to him, who knows Him to exist, His true nature becomes manifest.

Though the stanza will read quite a riddle to the not-well-initiated, it is a direct statement to all those who know the *Sastra*; and this *Sadhu* is sure that all of you in this *Yagnasala* are today really full blown Vedantins to whom this passage must be automatically clear.

The *Atma-chaitanya* can be realised either as conditioned in Its manifestations,

or in Itself and as such, without any of Its attributes and therefore as a Pure Witness of all the states of consciousness. At many places during His discourses Lord Death had already pointed out to Nachiketas that a meditator, meditating upon the symbol of Truth, OM, considering it to represent the lower *Brahman*, shall attain the joys of the *Hiranyagarbha*, and if, on the other hand, one meditates upon OM as a symbol of the attributeless, Pure Consciousness, the practitioner fulfils his meditations and actually realises in him the Absolute and the All pervading Reality. Sree Sankara in his commentary comments upon this stanza in the true spirit of the very text-book.

Many of you might find, if you are following the Ramkrishnan Math edition or the Yoga Vedanta Forest University publication of Rishikesh, that both of them had felt almost an unnecessary urge to find a defect in Shri Shankara's commentary!!

Chinmaya for one finds it difficult to accept this amendment which they have suggested

Sree Sankara comments upon this *mantra* and says that the *Śruti* is here warning the seekers against meditating upon Truth as manifested with attributes, and that She is vigorously advocating the meditation upon the Absolute Truth, unmanifest and attributeless.

According to the above text-books Shankara's commentary falls short of the mark and that a closer hit would have been gained by directly explaining the *mantra* to hint at a warning that the meditator should meditate upon Truth as Existence (*Asthi*) and not as Non-existent (*Nasthi*). as some of the Buddhist schools of philosophers maintain along with a section of the Indian logicians (*Naiyyāyikas*)

He who realises the *Atman* as the very

Essence of Existence, he has realized the *Atman*. In thus realising, the successful seeker in his meditation comes to contact himself with a Plane of Consciousness wherein he realises the Source of All Life to be Pure Existence alone. "Existence-in-Itself" is a term used to differentiate the existence *of* a thing from the existence *as such*. 'Existence of a thing' is well known to us: but here the existence is known in its qualified or conditioned state

Truth is the subjective knowledge of Existence *as such* to be the very Nature of the Knowledge Absolute. The pure state of 'being' (*Kevala Asthitwa Bhava*) is declared in the *Upanishads* as the essence of the Self-realization-moment. He who reaches this State of Knowledge reaches the Supreme Goal of life and rises from the seat of meditation, not as the very same mortal who went on to it, but as a God-man upon earth.

यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते
 कामा येऽस्य हृदि श्रिताः ।
 अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भव-
 त्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ॥ १४ ॥

Yada Sarvae Pramuchyanthae
 Kama Yasya Hridisrithaha
 Adha Marthyo-Amritho Bhava-
 Thyatra Brahma Samasnuthae

(14) When all the desires that dwell in the heart are destroyed, then the mortal becomes immortal, and he attains *Brahman* even here

The State of Desirelessness is the State of *Kavalya* or Illumination. That state can be reached even while the individual lives his life within his mortal form. Here, *Sruti* is amply clear in her support of the *Advaitin's* claim that man can realise God-hood in this very birth and reach the state called *Jivan Mukti*. We have already discussed during our lectures on *Kenopanishad* that there is a school of thinkers who believe that

the final state of realisation can come only in the very last moments of *life* and after realisation the body falls off; this school believes only what is technically termed as the *Videhamukti* (liberation after death)

यदा सर्वे प्रभिद्यन्ते
हृदयस्येह ग्रन्थयः ।
अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भव-
त्येदावदनुशासनम् ॥ १५ ॥

Yada Sarvae Prabhidhyanthae
Hridaya-Syacha Grandhayah
Adha Marthyo-Amritho Bhava-
Tyathavadanusasanam

(15) When all the Knots of the Heart are severed here on earth, then the mortal becomes immortal, so far is the instruction (of all *Vedanta*).

This stanza is a continuation of the idea given out in the previous *mantra*

Hridayagrandhi (the Knots of the Heart) —This is a philosophical concept

ntertained by the Vedantins. According to them the *Avidya* (nescience), meaning, the self-forgetfulness of man of his own true Eternal Nature, is the cause of all his continued delusions and super-impositions. In the darkness we mis-understand a piece of rope to be a snake; the serpent is here risen from our "not understanding the true nature of the rope." And now once having seen the serpent we continue super-imposing upon it a length, a height, a girth, a hood and such other attributes of the non-existent serpent. Similarly, man not recognizing his Real Nature (in the ignorance of his True Nature) gets agitated with *Kama* (desire) and these very desires in their attempts to fulfil themselves among the world-of-sense-objects become the *Karma* actions. Thus, *Avidya* in the Spiritual plane is itself the 'desires' in the mental plane, which, again, are themselves modified into 'actions' in the outer world-of-objects. "Every action has its reaction,"

and thus, in order to reap the reactions the ego-centres escape from their present forms through the back doors of death, only to re-enter in newer forms through the front-gates of birth !

The bonds of *Avidya* (nescience), *Kama* (desire), and *Karma* (action) are together called the Knots of the Heart in Vedantic philosophy

When a human being during his life time breaks assunder these bonds, he in fact, ends his ignorance. Ignorance can be ended only with Knowledge. Thus, the Knots of the Heart are broken down at the dawn of Knowledge, liberation comes with Knowledge (*Gyananenatu Kanyalyam*)

For purposes of emphasis *Sruti* here in, again reasserts the view of *Jivan Mukti* advocated by Shri Shankara and his followers. Man becomes God-upon-earth in his Perfection of Knowledge gained through

his own self efforts during his life-time even while living within his own flesh and bones.

शतं चैका च हृदयस्य नाड्य-

स्तासां मूर्धानमभिनिः सृतैका ।

तयोर्ध्वमायन्नमृतत्वमेति

विष्वङ्दन्या उत्क्रमणे भवन्ति ॥ १६ ॥

Satham Chaika Cha Hridayasya Nadya

Sthasam Moordhan-Mabhinih-Sritaikaa

Thayordwa-Mayanya-Amritatwa-Methi

Vishwng-Danya Utkramanae Bhavanthi

(16) Hundred and one are the nerves of the heart, of them one penetrates the crown of the head Going upwards through it, man attains immortality; but others lead (the departed) differently

At this stage of your knowledge of Indian philosophy you all may find it not too easy to follow the meaning of this *mantra*, which is one of the rock bottom foundations in the philosophy of *Yoga*.

A much more detailed analysis of the spiritual-body encased within our physical form is supplied to us by some of the other *Upanishads*. In the *Vedic Age* probably there was wide currency for this knowledge that Lord Death is here only hinting at the particular creed in a passing statement. Chinmaya feels that it would not be adding anything to your total understanding of this *Upanishad* by a cumbersome and exhaustive explanation of this *mantra*, especially when we have only a day more with us to go through the next two *mantras*.

However, in haste we may touch up the problem. The subtle spiritual body is believed to be constituted of some 101 subtle nerves which the surgeons' scalpel shall never desect nor their eyes ever see ! Of them the most important is the *Shushumna*, which runs parallel to the back-bone all along its length and penetrating the top-bone, called the Apex, extends itself upto the centre of the human crown

The sensitiveness of the top centre portion of the crown can be very well experienced by ourselves ! Especially in a new born child one can feel the heart-beat very regularly at that place.

Whatever be its physiological explanation and relative position as far as you, the seekers in the *Path of Knowledge*, are concerned it is sufficient to know that the ego-centre of a meditator, who has realised during his life the *Apara Brahman* (relative Truth), at the time of his death escapes through the *Shushumna* and crossing distinct regions of experiences reaches *Brahma Loka* from where, ultimately at the end of *Kalpa*, with the dissolution of that world of experience the ego-centre reaches the Supreme State of Realisation.

As for the one who had realised the Eternal, All-pervading Truth in its attributeless pure essence, even while living in the body form, becomes a *Jivan Mukta*. To such a *Gyani* even the *Śruti* denies all

passage or journey. (*Na Tasya Parana Uthramathi*) By knowing Brahman he becomes *Brahman*. Such a complete and total liberation is called *Karvalya Mukti*.

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषोऽन्तरात्मा

सदा जनानां हृदये सन्निविष्टः ।

तं स्वाच्छरीरात् प्रवृहेन्मुञ्जादिवेषीकां धैर्येण

तं विद्याच्छुक्रममृतं तं विद्याच्छुक्रममृतमिति ॥ १७ ॥

Angushtamatraha Purusho-Antaratma

Sada Jananam Hridayae Sannivishtaha

Tham Swa-Chhareerath Pravrihae-Nmunchadi-

vesekam Dhairyaena

Tham Vidyath Sukra-Mamritam Tham

Vidyath Sukra-Mamritam-ithi.

(17) The Purusha of the size of a thumb, the Inner Self, is always seated in the heart of all living beings; one should draw Him out from one's own body with steadiness, as one draws the pith (stalk) from a reed; one should know Him as Pure and Immortal

We have already discussed in the

earlier *mantras* the concept of the Supreme Reality as a mere presence, “*in the shape of one’s own thumb,*” residing in the centre of one’s heart. We noted there that the size and shape have been given to the Self to facilitate our meditations, during the earlier stages of the *Path of Dhyan*. In fact the *Atman* is formless although here Self is described as having a shape and a form. This is only for the purpose of providing the seekers with a prop for their mind at meditation to concentrate upon.

It is quite appropriate that Lord Death should conclude his *Upanishadic* declarations to his disciple Nachiketas with a direct call upon him to continue his meditations and discriminate the Real Divine presence in the centre of the centre from the unreal concentric coating of matter which the Spirit has seemingly put on to play its game of hide-and-seek ! Beyond the five *kosas* (Sheaths) lies the Spirit.

The analogy employed here (to show how through discrimination one reaches the final State of Self-cognising-the Self) is, true to the style of the *Upanishads*, most emphatic and voluminously self-expressive. Nachiketas, and through Nachiketas the entire world of seekers is advised to extricate the element of Absolute Consciousness, the Pure Chit-essence, from the delusory consciousness of the body, by continuous and deep practices of discrimination and meditation.

That during meditation one should not in the least strain oneself is so vividly brought out by the analogy of "*drawing out the Pith from the reed*"; the reed itself is the most delicate of plants, and its stalk is more so: and to draw out this flimsy and subtle pith from its outer envelopments constituted of the stalks of the leaves themselves, is a delicate act which needs a softness of touch, a measured and practised application of force, and a subtle silky

deftness in handling the entire process !!

Pure Consciousness that is the controller and the director of all physical, mental and intellectual activities in a human being is the Soul or the *Atman*. The *Upanishad* concludes with the repeated assertion that we must know Him to be pure and immortal. He is 'pure,' in the sense that impurities of the mind as *Kama* (desires), *Krodha* (anger), *Lobha* (avarice) etc are not in Him. He is 'immortal', in as much as He is the Eternal Unborn Truth, All-pervading and the Uncaused cause of all effects seen in His manifestations !!

मृत्युप्रोक्तं नचिकेतोऽथ लब्ध्वा

विद्यामेतां योगविधिं च कृत्स्नम् ।

ब्रह्मप्राप्तो विरजोऽभूद् विमृत्यु

रन्योऽप्येवं यो विदध्यात्ममेवम् ॥ १८ ॥

Mrithyu-Proktam Nachiketho-Dha Labdhwa

Vidhyametam Yogavidhim Cha Kritsnam

Brahmapraptho Virajo-Abhooth Vimirthyu

Ranyo-Pyavam Yo Vidadhyatma-Mevam.

(18) Nachiketas, having been so instructed by Death in this knowledge and in the whole process of *Yoga*, became free from all impurities and death, and attained *Brahman*; and so will attain he too who knows thus the Inner Self

The previous stanza with its repetition in its last line and the particle '*Iti*' had already given us the indication that the *Upanishad* had ended. This mantra can therefore be only interpreted as the words of *Sruti Bhagavati* Herself Nachiketas after listening to the entire *Upanishadic* advices of his Master and having acquired a thorough knowledge of the technique (*Yoga Vidhi*) of self-perfection by which he can come to experience the Absolute Perfection as his own Real Nature, retired to a quite retreat, where he practising the *Brahma Vidya* came to be pure in mind and intellect, when, through the processes of higher meditation he Realised his Self.

Virajah (free from Rajas or Sin) ; free

from impurities ; free from vice and virtue) :—The *Gyana Sadhana* consists in controlling the flow of the sense-organs towards their sense objects by a powerful application of the powers of discrimination and severe mental discipline. The mind is thus redeemed in slow and steady stages from its dross such as egoistic vanities, selfish self-centred passions and desires, attachments, lusts, greeds etc , applying such a controlled and purified mind to dwell at a limited chosen form and idea, its powers of concentration are developed. Lastly, these newly developed powers for continued concentration are applied with greater intensity in delving deep beneath the delusory, five-matter-envelopments of the spirit and to contact the Self, which is of nature, Pure Consciousness, Eternal and Absolute.

If one seeker at the period of the *Vedic* era had realised the Self in him through the blessings of such a Super-divine master

as Lord Death, to many of us it may seem to be an historical accident and not a sure achievement for all seekers at all times. To check-mate this possible doubt in Her readers, *Sruti* herein emphatically asserts, "So will attain he too who knows thus the inner Self". Even today, he who can fulfil in himself all the necessary qualifications, explained so vividly in this *Upanishad*, and then practise the entire technique of *Brahma Vidya*, as diligently as Nachiketas did, he too can, realise the Self and become one with Truth . . . A God-man upon earth

ॐ सह नावतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु ।
 सह वीर्यं करवावहै । तेजस्य नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ॥
 ॐ शान्तिः । शान्तिः । शान्तिः ॥

Om Saha Navavathu Saha Naow Bhunakthu.
 Saha Veeryamkaravavahai. Thejaswinavadheetha-
 masthu Maa Vidwishavahaihi.

[Om Shanthihi ! Shanthihi !! Shanthihi !!!]

Let Him protect us both. May He Bless us with the Bliss of knowledge Let us exert together. May what we study be well studied. May we not hate (quarrel with each other)!

OM PEACE !! PEACE !! PEACE !!

This Peace-verse gives us an idea of the team spirit in which the teacher and the taught approached the business of teaching and learning. How far removed it is from the modern relationship between the teacher and the taught!

Today the teacher reaches the desk only to pull through his 'job', and the students seem to be there to put in only their compulsory number of attendance! To the teacher the taught has become an unavoidable and gruesome botheration: to the taught, the teachers

are thorns in the otherwise soft flower-bed of their college days !!

In *Brahma Vidya* no progress is possible without the active co-operation of the teacher and equally sincere co-operation from the taught. Hence, the special prayer "*May we never quarrel with each other*". This prayer seems to be specially imperative in the study of the scripture where chances for wasteful, useless, arguments are many and they can lead us into the meshes of ruinous misunderstanding, un-understanding and non-understanding of the *Sruties* at every step.

Each day the Teacher and the pupil started and ended their lessons chanting this stanza of peace. Even to-day wherever the *Sruti* is taught this practice is strictly followed.

"HARI OM TAT SAT."



.....करोमियद्यत् सकलं परस्मै
श्रीमन् नारायणेति समर्पयामि ।

Karomi Yadyath Sakalam Parasmai
Sreeman-Narayaneethi Samarpayami

All that I work and achieve is dedi-
cated entirely to Lord Sree Narayan

committed by an Afghan subject against the British Minister or the persons above mentioned who are attached to the British Legation, the case shall be tried according to the local law by the Courts of Afghanistan within whose jurisdiction the offence is committed, and the same procedure shall be observed *vice versa* with regard to offences committed in England by British subjects against the Afghan Minister or other persons above mentioned attached to the Afghan Legation.

(c) (1) A Consul-General, Consuls, and members of their staffs and households, who are subjects of the State in which they are employed, shall remain subject in all respects to the jurisdiction, laws, and regulations of such State.

(11) A Consul-General, Consuls, and members of their staffs and households, other than subjects of the State in which they are employed, shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Courts of such State, in respect of any criminal offence committed against the Government or subjects of such State, provided that no Consul-General, Consul, or member of their staff or household shall suffer any punishment other than fine; provided also that both Governments retain always the right to demand recall from their dominions of any Consul-General, Consul, or member of their staff or household.

(111) A Consul-General, Consuls, and members of their staffs and households, other than subjects

of the State in which they are employed, shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Courts of the said State in respect of any civil cause of action arising in the territory of the said State, provided that they shall enjoy the customary facilities for the performance of their duties

(iv) The Consul-General of Afghanistan and Consuls shall have a right to defend the interests of themselves or any members of their staffs and households who are subjects of their own Governments in any Court through pleaders or by the presence of one of the consulate officials, with due regard to local procedure and laws

(d) The Ministers, Consul-General, and Consuls of the two High Contracting Parties and the members of their staffs and households shall not take any steps or commit any acts injurious to the interests of the Government of the country to which they are accredited

(e) The Ministers, Consul-General, and Consuls of the two Governments in either country shall be permitted to purchase or hire on behalf of their Governments residences for themselves and their staff and servants, or sites sufficient and suitable for the erection of such residence and grounds of a convenient size attached, and the respective Governments shall give all possible assistance towards such purchase or hire, provided that the Government of the country to which the Ministers or Consuls are accredited shall, in the event of an Embassy or Consulate being